COMMENTARY

THE CULT OF THE "AMERICAN CONSENSUS"

Homogenizing Our History

JOHN HIGHAM

IN RETROSPECT, it is becoming apparent that the decade of the 1940's marked a fundamental change of direction in the exploration of the American past. At the time nothing very unusual seemed to be happening in the minds of American historians, in spite of the clamor in the world around them. The usual outpouring of conventional monographs continued. Our endless fascination with the pageant of the Civil War produced a new but not a very different crop of narratives. There was, to be sure, a rising volume of criticism of the giants who had dominated American historical scholarship in the period between the wars: Frederick Jackson Turner, Charles A. Beard, and Vernon L. Parrington. But the image they had fixed on the screen of the American past had only begun to dissolve. As late as 1950, when Henry Steele Commager's *The American Mind* carried our intellectual history down to date in the spirit of Parrington, the result sounded only a trifle old-fashioned.

In the last few years, however, the critical attacks of the 40's have matured into a full-scale reappraisal of the main themes in American history. The great trio of yesteryear have gone into eclipse. Their vision of an America in which democracy, vaguely associated with the West, battled against entrenched economic privilege no longer seems basic enough to define the shape of our national development. On the whole, the distinctive interpretations of Turner, Beard, and Parrington no longer appear persuasive enough to evoke really lively controversy. They linger on, flattened and desiccated, in the pages of many a textbook, where they may occasionally inflame the Daughters of the American Revolution, the *Daily News*, and others who specialize in discovering the menace of dead issues. Meanwhile, our living historical awareness has moved so far from the interests of Turner, Beard, and Parrington that interpretive historians now feel less need to criticize or defend them than to supersede them.

Giants being notoriously oversized, no one has yet stepped into their shoes. The new books that are giving us an altered sense of who we are lack either the scale or the density or the architectural strength that history of the first order of importance must have. Still, some lively work is being done. Some important books that try to fit frag-

EXAMINING the recent work of historians who argue that the essence of America's genius is its subordination of ideas to practical needs, JOHN HIGHAM enters a few *caveats*. Author of *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism* and professor of history at Rutgers University, Mr. Higham is now on leave, teaching at Columbia.

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mentary research into a new pattern, plausible to contemporary sensibilities, are being written. The dominant image they project bears few resemblances to the turbulent picture that prevailed before the 1940's.

An earlier generation of historians, inspired by Turner, Beard, and Parrington and nurtured in a restless atmosphere of reform, had painted America in the bold hues of conflict. Sometimes their interpretations pitted class against class, sometimes section against section; and increasingly they aligned both sections and classes behind the banners of clashing ideologies. It was East vs. West, with the South gravitating from one to the other; farmers vs. businessmen, with urban workers in the pivotal position; city vs. country; property rights vs. human rights; Hamiltonianism vs. Jeffersonianism. These lines of cleavage were charted continuously from the Colonial period to the present. They gave a sense of depth to the social struggles which historians in the early 20th century observed all around them.

The divisions between periods loomed as large as those between groups. Among scholars attuned to conflict, American history appeared jagged and discontinuous. Historians like Beard had an eye for the convulsive moments in history, and they dramatized vividly the turning points when one side or the other seemed to seize control. To them, America had had several revolutions, usually triumphant over formidable resistance, and always big with unfulfilled promise. They saw the revolution of 1776 not simply as a war for independence but as a drastic redistribution of power within the Colonies. They called the Civil War the "Second American Revolution," and in between they acclaimed the "Revolution of 1800," when Jefferson came to power, and the militant rise of the common man behind Andrew Jackson. There was, of course, the Industrial Revolution, followed by the heroic Populist Revolt; and similar social conflicts throughout the Colonial period caught their attention.

With some lapse of consistency these connoisseurs of change often played down the newness of the New Deal. The closer they looked to the present, the more clearly they observed the traditional elements in a movement of protest. The issues of their own day, they knew, were anchored in a long heritage, the changes no more than might be expected; the transitions of the past looked much more radical. Over all, however, the crises of American history stood out as the milestones of progress, when men shed outworn beliefs and remade their institutions in response to the demands of a changed environment.

IN CONTRAST, the new look of American history is strikingly conservative. More than at any time before, historians are discovering a placid, unexciting past. To an impressive degree, the dominant interpretations have recaptured the spirit of Alexis de Tocqueville, whose *Democracy in America* has emerged in recent years from a characteristic neglect during the early 20th century. As Tocqueville did more than a century ago, today's historians are exhibiting a happy land, adventurous in manner but conservative in substance, and—above all—remarkably homogeneous.

For one thing, current scholarship is carrying out a massive grading operation to smooth over America's social convulsions. The American Revolution has lost its revolutionary character, becoming again what genteel historians had always said it was: a reluctant resistance of sober Englishmen to infringements on English liberties. We have learned that the Jacksonians yearned nostalgically to restore the stable simplicity of a bygone age, and that the Populists were rural businessmen deluded by a similar pastoral mythology. Paradoxically, we have even grown conservative enough to recognize fairly radical changes in the recent past and so to probe, with Richard Hofstadter, for elements of social revolution in the New Deal. Hofstadter's very influential book, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (1955) neatly reverses the older views. It presents Populism in the 1890's and Progressivism in the early 20th century not as

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mighty upheavals but as archaic efforts to recapture the past. On the other hand, it shows the New Deal as an abrupt break with the past.

Among earlier crises, the Civil War alone has resisted somewhat the flattening process. Yet a significant decline has occurred in the number of important contributions to Civil War history from professional scholars. One is tempted to conclude that disturbances which cannot be minimized must be neglected. On the other hand, the growing attraction of the Civil War to journalists suggests that it provides a larger public with a kind of surrogate for all of the other dramatic moments that historians are deflating.

By reducing the importance of these turning points, the newer interpretations have enabled us to rediscover the continuity of American history, the stability of basic institutions, the toughness of the social fabric. The same result is also being attained by dissolving the persistent dualisms, which Parrington and Beard emphasized, and substituting a monistic pattern. Instead of two traditions or sections or classes deployed against one another all along the line of national development, we are told that America in the largest sense has had one unified culture. Classes have turned into myths, sections have lost their solidarity, ideologies have vaporized into climates of opinion. The phrase "*the* American experience" has become an incantation.

To fill in its meaning, historians have joined social scientists in a new fascination with the concept of national character. Since definitions of national character necessarily concern the pervasive, persistent features of a whole culture, progressive scholars distrusted them. Today, however, the study of national character brings out the unifying effects of forces that formerly impressed us as disruptive. Thus David Potter's *People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character* (1954) advances an economic interpretation of our similarities instead of our differences. Whereas the generation of Parrington and Beard had explained basic cleavages on economic grounds, Potter shows our wealth shaping our common ways of life.

Of course, the new interpreters have to face a considerable amount of real strife at various times in the history of the nation. They must also recognize that many Americans at such times have *thought* their country cleft between "haves" and "have-nots." But an emphasis on the belief can help to minimize the reality. A psychological approach to conflict enables historians to substitute a schism in the soul for a schism in society. Certainly present-day scholars tend to subjectivize the stresses in American life. Divisions, which the previous generation understood as basic opposition between distinct groups, turn into generalized psychological tensions running through the society as a whole. John Dos Passos's bitter outburst in the 1930's—"all right we are two nations"—becomes the record of a state of mind. An able synthesis of recent research on the age of the great tycoons explains the popular outcries against them as a projection upon one group of responsibility for the rapid industrial changes into which all were thrown.*

Accordingly, when historians today write critically, they scrupulously avoid singling out any one segment of the population for blame. They either criticize the myths and stereotypes that have exaggerated the differences between competing groups; or they attack our uniformities and hanker for more variety. Louis Hartz, in what was perhaps the most outstanding of the new interpretive books, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought Since the Revolution* (1955), worried because we have no other tradition. A regime of freedom has had so unchallenged a sway in America, Hartz contended, that most American political debate has been shadow-boxing. "America must look to its contact with other nations to provide that spark of philosophy, that grain of

*Samuel Hays, *The Response to Industrialism, 1885-1914* (1957).

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relative insight that its own history has denied it."

Hartz's own sympathies lay with dissent and diversity. He was clearly disturbed by the soporific intellectual implications of the liberal consensus he described. To take full advantage of the new monolithic approach to American history would require a point of view much more complacent, much less internationally oriented, and much less respectful of the value of ideas. About the time when Hartz was first publishing the early chapters of his book in scholarly journals, Daniel J. Boorstin was making a similar but more drastic revision of American history in a conservative direction. Boorstin wrote in a mood thoroughly in tune with the unphilosophic harmony which he and Hartz were independently appraising.

A slim volume of lectures published in 1953, *The Genius of American Politics,* stated the essence of Boorstin's thesis. Ostensibly, the book concerned a relatively limited problem: why has America produced almost no systematic, fundamental political theory? Boorstin was not the first, of course, to brood over this question. Most American intellectual historians try pretty hard to deny the charge. Boorstin, however, had no apologies to make. He presented this supposed shortcoming as a triumphant demonstration of our success as a nation. With sour, sidelong glances at Europe, he argued that Americans did not need basic theories. Having no deep antagonisms, they could dispense with metaphysical defenses. Never having repudiated their past, they could discuss their problems as lawyers rather than political philosophers. American values had emerged from happy experience; here the "ought" derived from the "is." In the 20th century, he admitted, Americans could no longer take themselves for granted; but let them not therefore try to acquire an ideology and become crusaders. American political thought need only consult the wisdom imbedded in our historic institutions. In spite of the author's contempt for European theory, a bit of Edmund Burke proved useful in the end.

This celebration of the mindlessness of American life came from no provincial lowbrow. Boorstin is one of the very few native students of American history who possesses European culture, and participates in it with easy familiarity. A Rhodes Scholar, a student at various times of the humanities and the biological sciences, a barrister of the Inner Temple, author of a study in English intellectual history, he knows of what he scorns. Yet the view he advanced in *The Genius of American Politics* cannot be dismissed simply as an intellectual's self-hatred—the perversity of a man somehow driven to revulsion from what he has cherished. The book was more than this. It crisply summarized and foreshadowed the new trend of American historiography: the appeal to homogeneity, continuity, and national character. Above all, it swept aside the characteristically progressive approach to American intellectual history as a dialectic of warring ideologies.

Louis Hartz was already doing the same thing in the articles later reprinted in his *Liberal Tradition in America,* though Hartz's appraisal showed the intellectual deficiencies produced by the homogeneity and continuity of American society. Having no such qualms about our supposedly one-track culture, Boorstin went a step beyond Hartz. The latter at least conceded to America one system of ideas; Boorstin admitted none at all.

In their different but overlapping ways, the two books sketched the general outlines of an anti-progressive interpretation of American history. While other scholars were rewriting specific episodes in the story, Boorstin and Hartz revised the plot. Boorstin did not leave the matter there, however. He has now come forth with the first volume of a projected trilogy, ambitiously entitled *The Americans,** which brilliantly elaborates the thesis stated in his previous book. The new volume ranges lightly but learnedly across the Colonial period. Far from being confined to political forms, about which it says

**The Americans: The Colonial Experience,* Random House, 434 pp., $6.00. An excerpt from this volume appeared in COMMENTARY, October 1958.

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relatively little, it has sections on religion, science, the professions, styles of speech, the press, and the art of war. On each of these subjects Boorstin presses the central theme that America flourished by scrapping European blueprints, dissolving the social and intellectual distinctions of European life, and moving toward a homogeneous society of undifferentiated men. The whole work amounts to a running demonstration that a naive practicality enabled Americans from a very early date to unite in a stable way of life, undisturbed by divisive principles.

Let it be said at once that this first volume seems to me a collection of sparkling fragments rather than an enduring monument, a fascinating miscellany rather than a grand achievement. Though clearly the most provocative book of the year in American history, it selects waywardly—even willfully—an assortment of topics for the illustration of a thesis which is both too simple and too elusive to embrace the complex experience of a nation. Since Boorstin's book assumes the continuity of American history, it has none itself. Since it revels in the unsystematic character of American culture, it has little plan or system. It is a series of incisive, original improvisations, which never become a symphony. (From the author's point of view the metaphor may be unfair: symphonies are European, he likes jazz.)

Boorstin's ingenuity in turning intellectual limitations into social virtues never flags. Beginning with the Puritans, he promptly deflates the exaggerated claims recently made for their philosophic stature. Having done their creative thinking in Europe, they could concentrate in America on organizing a community. Having a wilderness at their doorstep, they could expel dissenters and so did not need to think out fine-spun theories of toleration. Having the Bible and the English common law to guide them, they could act on precedents instead of losing themselves in utopian abstractions. Whereas other writers have liked the Puritans for their piety or disliked them for their fanaticism, Boorstin loves their sober practicality.

The one American group that is roughly handled in this generally indulgent book is the Quakers. They represent resistance to the American way of life: they refused to bend religious principle to social expediency. Focusing as always on men's attitudes rather than their ideas, Boorstin presents the Quakers as self-righteous dogmatists in their mental habits in spite of the absence of dogma in their formal creed. As missionaries, they panted after martyrdom instead of seeking converts. As rulers of Pennsylvania, they sacrificed some humane legislation and otherwise abdicated responsibility in order to preserve their personal purity. Through these unworldly and un-American proclivities, the Quakers grew insular toward their neighbors and so failed to become "undifferentiated" Americans. To make matters worse, they remained cosmopolitan in spirit and so failed to achieve a "good" kind of insularity, i.e., from Europe. Nothing is said of Quaker leadership in the anti-slavery movement, and almost nothing of their religious toleration, doubtless because these activities were too deep-dyed in principle. Boorstin acclaims toleration in Virginia because it arose there from a practical compromising spirit, not from any theory; he tells us that intolerance in Massachusetts was "useful" in maintaining the unity of the community; but for either tolerance or intolerance as a principle his book has no place.

This is too thoughtful a book to ignore consistently the dangers of the opportunistic and parochial qualities it celebrates. Particularly in the final section, dealing with military institutions, the debits of a short-sighted amateurism are plainly entered. This is also too widely informed a book to rest entirely on the soundness of its general argument. Some of the topics treated here, such as the practice of medicine and of law in the Colonies, have hitherto received the attention of only a few specialists. Although the experts will undoubtedly pick at many of Boorstin's statements, any reader who can control his exasperation at the anti-intellectual bias of the book will find arresting insights into phases of early American life that

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diverged significantly from English patterns. On the whole, I know of no other book that combines so effectively a grasp of large features of American culture with the intimate, functional detail that makes a social order come to life.

YET the deeper one goes in this book, the more perplexed one becomes about the criteria it applies in measuring American achievements. The notion that a "pragmatic temper" distinguishes American culture, setting it apart from the bookish and contemplative culture of Europe, is one of our commonest national stereotypes. In 1893 Frederick Jackson Turner lyricized "that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients; that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends." The same image of America was held by most of the progressive historians whose views Boorstin has clearly undertaken to revise. Is his perspective really much different from that of an old-fashioned liberal pragmatist, devoted to a tough-minded respect for experience?

Often the outlook seems very similar indeed. Like Parrington and Beard, Boorstin associates belles-lettres with an aristocratic society, an oppressive class system, and a stagnant regime of privilege. Like John Dewey's philosophy, Boorstin's history celebrates the empirical thinker-doer who is uninhibited by the formal learning of the past—the early American physician, for example, who was fortunately unschooled in the learned ignorance of European medicine. Like any good pragmatist, Boorstin identifies America with innovation, experiment, and a fluid response to the novelties of experience. His democratic rhetoric sometimes exceeds that of the pragmatists themselves: his image of the American as an "undifferentiated man" harks back to Whitman's glorification of the "divine average."

But the substance of this book bears no consistent relation to these rhetorical overtones. If we look at what Boorstin is really writing about, we find very little evidence of experimentation, no innovations except those which circumstances forced the colonists to make, and almost no interest on the author's part in democracy in any positive sense. One of the best sections of the book discusses the extraordinary standardization that the English language underwent in America under the influence of English literary models. To describe this linguistic uniformity as "the vernacular for equality" helps along one part of the argument of the book, but hardly testifies to innovation or experiment. As for the theme of equality, another section of the book lovingly describes the Virginia aristocracy, whose special virtue according to Boorstin lay in maintaining an English aristocratic pattern in a businesslike and unreflective way. Or, to take another example, consider the section entitled "A Conservative Press." It begins by saying that Colonial printers could serve the general public since they did not need to print good books; it ends by showing that the printers actually served the ruling groups who subsidized and controlled them.

Clearly, the pragmatism that informs this bland approval of American institutions resembles only superficially the fighting faith we used to know. For the true pragmatist —for James and Dewey and all their tribe— intellectuals played a creative role in history. Ideas were precious tools for attaining practical ends. Consequently, being "practical" meant continually and deliberately adapting existing institutions to changing problems. For Boorstin, however, thought does not guide behavior; behavior defines thought, or makes it unnecessary. To him, the practical is the traditional, but for Americans only. Experiment is our hallowed prejudice, our native American orthodoxy. It is our way of conforming to circumstances, and this way seems to Boorstin all the more agreeable because it does not, like European conservatism, enshrine an otiose set of principles. In this view, the pragmatic virtues lose what little consistency they once had and all connection with a larger universe of values. Instead of furnishing any sense of direction at all, they become fossilized exhibits in our national museum. Activity

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turns into possession, and our pragmatic habits supply a symbol of acquiescence to any circumstances that can be labeled as distinctively American.

How did this larcenous seizure of pragmatic attitudes for the sake of a conservative historiography come about? The author of *The Americans* did not always write with such affection for the expediential and such scorn for theories. In 1948 he published *The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson,* a searching examination of the structure and assumptions of Jeffersonian thought. In that book he took abstract principles very seriously indeed. There he explored the philosophical results of the American pragmatic temper—and found them dangerous. The main emphasis fell on Jefferson's undervaluing of the reflective side of human nature: "the desire to get things done predominated over the need to be at peace with God and oneself." This book maintained that Jefferson's distrust of metaphysics mired him in intellectual confusion, and that his materialistic premises led ultimately to the moral obtuseness of modern American thought. Now, through an extraordinary reversal, the vices imputed to Jefferson have become the virtues of America. With incredible virtuosity, Boorstin has furnished a new map of American history with each spin of his own intellectual compass.

To understand this about-face, it may help to note that both books have a deeply conservative character, though in different ways. *The Lost World* rests on a philosophical conservatism. It might almost have been written by a neo-Thomist, for essentially it accuses the liberal tradition, which stretches from Jefferson to Dewey, of lacking humility in the face of God and history. *The Americans,* on the other hand, grows out of an empirical conservatism, which rejects all ideologies in the name of long-established institutions. The earlier book implies that we need a conservative philosophy. The recent one tells us that we have something much better: a conservative way of life.

The shift from one position to the other reflects, I think, a change of fashion in conservative thinking. During the late 1940's and early 1950's a good many intellectuals with historical interests were trying to define a tradition of conservative thought in America. Historians had for so long canonized a succession of liberal heroes that the first reaction to the new postwar mood was to create a competing pantheon of conservative luminaries. Books by Russell Kirk, Clinton Rossiter,* and other intellectual historians revealed that a number of American thinkers had respected original sin and had opposed the official cult of progress. Boorstin's *Lost World* fell in with this effort, though it contributed negatively by exposing the alleged failure of the liberal tradition.

BEFORE long, however, the attempt to establish the value of a European type of conservatism in the American environment petered out; we hear very little of it today. The campaign had too obviously polemical a flavor and too unreal a taste: a tempest in an academic teapot. Great faith was required to believe that men like George Fitzhugh, Orestes Brownson, and Irving Babbitt ever had much profundity or any considerable impact. The really massive conservatism of American businessmen, politicians, and even most intellectuals, as we were discovering, spoke in the common language of the Enlightenment. Liberals and conservatives no longer seemed clearly distinguishable. As the ideological gap between them appeared to shrink, and as a mood of acquiescence spread in all quarters, the need to vindicate a conservative intellectual tradition disappeared. When the liberal ideology lost its cutting edge, conservatives ceased to require an ideological shield.

At this point a historiography that was conservative, without passing as such, won out. Instead of upholding the role of the right in America, it merges the left with the right. It argues that America has ordinarily fused a conservative temper with a liberal

*Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind, from Burke to Santayana* (1953); Clinton Rossiter, *Conservatism in America* (1955).

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state of mind. It displays, therefore, the homogeneity and the continuity of American culture. Writing sympathetically about the intellectual conservatism of today, Eric McKitrick has recently pointed out that it stresses the power of institutions; it has no ideological case to make—except, one might add, a case against ideologies. Boorstin, in his last two books, has joined this school, and, in a sense, has taken the lead.

The advantages of this point of view for American historians have not been slight. It has enabled them to cut through the too easy dualisms of progressive historiography. It is inspiring them to do important and original work in understanding American institutions. They should continue to do so. The conservative frame of reference, however, creates a paralyzing incapacity to deal with the elements of spontaneity, effervescence, and violence in American history. Richard Chase, one of the few literary critics who has successfully defied the current mood, has recently called attention to the wildness and extravagance that characterized the outstanding American novels. Similar qualities have shaken our society, from the Great Awakening of the 18th century to the Great Red Scares of the 20th, in spite of its sturdy institutional structure. They deserve more than patronizing attention.

Moreover, contemporary conservatism has a deadening effect on the historian's ability to take a conflict of ideas seriously. Either he disbelieves in the conflict itself (Americans having been pretty much of one mind), or he trivializes it into a set of psychological adjustments to institutional change. In either case, the current fog of complacency, flecked with anxiety, spreads backward over the American past.

It is not likely in the near future that many critical scholars will emphasize the polarities that fascinated the great progressive historians, nor is it desirable that they should. Certainly no one contends today that the debate between Jefferson and Hamilton, or between human rights and property rights, frames our intellectual history. But to stand Parrington and Beard on their heads does not solve the problem. American thought has had other dialectical patterns, which the present cult of consensus hides. Above all, perhaps, that cult neutralizes some moral issues that have played a not entirely petty or ignoble part in the history of the United States. To rediscover their grandeur and urgency, historians do not need the categories of Beard and Parrington, and can probably do without their now debased pragmatic philosophy. But we pay a cruel price in dispensing with their deeper values: an appreciation of the crusading spirit, a responsiveness to indignation, a sense of injustice.

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NASSER AND THE IRAQI COMMUNISTS

Arab Nationalism Meets the Soviet Advance

WALTER Z. LAQUEUR

A BRITISH Middle Eastern expert named Tom Little, in a book written several months ago which has just been published, declared: "The chasm between Cairo and Baghdad has been bridged by the Iraqi revolution, and the philosophy of President Nasser has bloomed on the banks of the Tigris."

It is no longer so clear that the chasm has been bridged. The tenor of recent exchanges between the two capitals has been hostile. Fairly typical is a Cairo Radio attack on Fadhil al Madawi, the pro-Communist cousin of Iraq's President Kassem and presiding judge of the People's Court in Baghdad: "You may rave, al Madawi, but the man whose place should be in dock has no right to sit in the judge's chair. The man who remained hiding in his house until 4 P.M. on July 14 [the day of the Baghdad revolution] has no right to try the heroes of July 14. . . . The man who was to be tried by a military tribunal on July 17 for stealing 500 coalbags from army stores has no right to place himself above army officers whose clean hands held guns to purge the country of corruption and graft. . . ."

This is the kind of language Cairo radio uses when it deals with "Zionism" and "Western imperialism." Evidently the philosophy of President Nasser is no longer blooming on the banks of the Tigris.

"The conflict between Communism and Arab nationalism," wrote the Egyptian weekly *Rose el Yussef* as 1958 ended, "was inevitable; the Communists felt that they were slipping and therefore opposed unity under Nasser." Earlier, Colonel Nasser himself had voiced alarm over Communist activities in Iraq, Syria, and Egypt. And in the first week of 1959, *Rose el Yussef's* editor again echoed Nasser in the hope that the Soviet Union "would not, for the sake of the Arab Communists, sacrifice the trust and respect it had won from the Arabs as a whole. The road to Moscow does not lead through the Syrian and Iraqi Communist parties."

Sharp competition between Nasser's followers and the Communists for Moscow's support characterizes the latest phase of the continuing Middle East crisis. Baghdad is the main trouble center, and for once the Western powers are not directly involved on either side. The regard in which Arab Communists hold the West can readily be imagined, and Nasser told the editor of the London *Spectator* on January 9: "If I were to give up our neutralism, I should wake up in the morning as a general without an army." This is an understatement. In fact, Nasser might never wake up if he halted his attacks on "Western imperialism."

The new phase of Middle Eastern conflict began in the early morning hours of July 14, 1958, when a military junta overthrew the Iraqi monarchy and the "pro-Western" government of Nuri es-Said. What started as a routine military coup, Latin American style, soon became something much bigger. For all the ingredients of a revolutionary situation were present in Baghdad. The Hashemite monarchy and the Nuri government were extremely unpopular, and the whole political and social structure of Iraq was—to put it mildly—antiquated. Power resided in the hands of a

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A YEAR ago, Iraq seemed a pillar of the U.S.-sponsored Baghdad Pact; six months ago, it seemed an attractive rival to Nasser's Egypt. Since then, this perspective has become confused or worse. WALTER Z. LAQUEUR discusses recent developments and the outlook for the future. Mr. Laqueur, a regular contributor, is the author of *Nationalism and Communism in the Middle East* (1956).

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small group of professionals and several hundred semi-feudal sheikhs. Most of the middle class, let alone the rest of the population, had no stake in Iraqi political life and had been antagonized in some degree by the authoritarian regime. Nuri's government was perhaps less oppressive than other Arab dictatorships—it was certainly less efficient—but it had no mass support either. An old-fashioned regime, it could not compete with the streamlined plebiscitarian dictatorships that had emerged in Cairo and Damascus. Major economic development projects were under way, but economic progress, however beneficial, could not alone stem the tide of revolution. What Iraq had desperately needed for years was not so much economic development as sweeping political and social reforms, reforms tantamount to a bourgeois revolution. The events in Iraq since the July coup are a direct consequence of the years of procrastination.

Foreign policy, as well as domestic rot, was involved. The Baghdad Pact with the West was universally detested, and a radical Arab nationalism acted as a common denominator uniting the opposition groups. Although these interpreted Arab nationalism differently, it did not matter too much while they were in opposition. The deep popular resentment that was felt toward Nuri's foreign policy, coupled with the explosive social situation, was more than enough to trigger a revolution.

Nobody outside Iraqi army headquarters had ever heard of Abdul Karim Kassem, Abdul Selim Arif, and the other colonels who came to power on July 14, and much speculation ensued abroad as to their political orientation. It was generally agreed that most of Iraq's new masters had belonged to the Istiqlal, a right-wing and originally pro-fascist group that had turned neutralist after World War II and collaborated with the leftist opposition groups. Rashid Ali, the hero of an abortive pro-Axis coup in 1941, Mohammed Mahdi Kubba, Faiq Samarai, and Sadiq Shinshal were believed to be the Istiqlal's leaders. Two left-wing opposition groups—Kamel Chaderchi's National Democrats and the Ba'ath—were believed to hold the allegiance of other officers. The National Democrats had, during the 1930's, influenced the Iraqi government in a populist, moderate socialist direction, but after the war the party had been seriously infiltrated by the Communists (whose own organizations had been outlawed). The Ba'ath, a vaguely socialistic movement founded in Syria, appeared relatively late on the Iraqi scene; it had never collaborated with the Communists.

The Western reception of the new Iraqi regime tended to be sympathetic once the initial shock of the coup passed. Official and unofficial observers reported to Washington and London that the colonels wished to restore order as soon as possible. Government spokesmen in Baghdad declared that they would seek friendly relations with both East and West, that they had no intention of nationalizing the foreign oil companies, and even that the Baghdad pact would not be abrogated. To be sure, there had been lynchings and ugly scenes in Baghdad, but the bloodshed and devastation were explained as unavoidable side-effects of a revolution. As one British eyewitness put it: "These riots appear to have no significance for the future; they were in no way expressions of official policy, and for the damage done to British property, the Republican government has promised compensation."

When it appeared that the new rulers were in no great hurry to join Nasser's United Arab Republic, sympathy toward the new regime became even more pronounced in some Western quarters. "Caractacus"* pointed out that Iraqis were very much like the British or Americans:

> Town life is much the same all over the world. In the rush hours there are traffic jams

**Revolution in Iraq*, by "Caractacus," Gollancz, London, 1959. Caractacus—see the *Annals* of Tacitus—was the wise counselor of impetuous Queen Boadicea against the Romans. This book, the first thus far on the Iraqi revolution, is a strange mixture of acute observation, common sense, special pleading, and an almost incredible political naivety.

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and people wait in crowds at the bus stops. In Baghdad it is on Friday, not Saturday afternoon and Sunday, that there are most loafers in the streets, that the biggest crowds come out of the cinemas. In the evenings, people sit about on what grass there is, walk up and down the streets. In summer the boys, and the men too, bathe in the river and play about; everyone drinks Coca-Cola; in winter there are the cooked-food stalls in the streets. Children coming out of school make the same noises everywhere. Iraqis do not play cricket, but they play football. People sit in tea shops; radios echo across the streets from open windows and cafés, with music, with the news. Iraqis worry about the same things we do, about jobs, taxes, holidays, hire-purchase instalments. The young men study to better themselves, students argue about politics, philosophy, art. The chief difference is that they have more faith in political action than we have, and they may be more hopeful that they can improve their future. There is more scope for technical advance ahead of them. But they are not really unlike us. The differences are striking at first sight, but superficial; the radio plays a different kind of music, the alphabet is different, the food is different, but music, words, food, all mean to them what they mean to us. . . .

An affecting picture, and utterly irrelevant. Surely residents of London and New York have even more in common with the people of Moscow and Leningrad, and that has not prevented the cold war. In any case, feelings of international solidarity seem insufficiently developed among Iraqi Coca-Cola drinkers. As the weeks passed, the Communist party emerged—through its main front, the Popular Resistance Movement—as Iraq's leading, biggest, and best-organized political force.

THE reasons were obvious. The other political groups were not real parties, but small debating or dining societies of lawyers or college teachers. The political know-how of the army leaders was quite limited; they were unable to stage a mass demonstration, let alone organize a political movement with clear slogans and some sort of ideology. Quite naturally, they sought advisers and assistants. Within a short time, Communists were placed in many leading positions in the police, the economic ministries, and, above all, the organs which control the Iraqi press and radio.

The Ba'ath was the only serious competitor, and the Communists reduced it to impotence within three months. The Ba'ath urged fusion with the UAR, which the Communists opposed because it would mean the dissolution of all political parties, including their own. By November 1958, Colonel Arif and Rashid Ali (who had just returned from exile in Cairo) were in jail awaiting trial. All the other politicians regarded as potential rivals by the Communists—including such Cabinet ministers as Fuad Riqabi and Sadiq Shinshal—had been deposed or rendered harmless.

These measures all took place under the nominal leadership of General Kassem. Doubtless he and his fellow officers hoped thus to consolidate their own position, and expected to get rid of the Communists one day in the same way that they had discarded their erstwhile Ba'athist allies. In fact, however, their political inexperience and plain stupidity made them so dependent on Communist support as to alarm even those observers who had long denied the very existence of a Communist movement in the Arab world.

Whatever their other differences, Colonel Nasser, the Ba'ath, and most of the old-fashioned and new-fashioned Middle Eastern experts of the West had all agreed that Communism had no future in the Arab domains. Glubb Pasha and other old-timers had considered Islam an unassailable bulwark. The younger experts, accepting one of Nasser's basic tenets, cited Arab nationalism as a more formidable political movement with a real emotional hold on both elites and masses. Now, after a decade of deprecating Communist influence in the Middle East, a decade of describing Communism and Arab nationalism as mutually exclusive, Western newspapers were suddenly flooded with dispatches from Baghdad and other Arab capitals that all began and ended with Khrushchev-*ante-portas*.

The tocsin was sounded even in Cairo.

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Late in December, Nasser for the first time attacked the Syrian Communists; he said they were separatists who wanted the "Northern Province" to secede from the UAR. *Al Nur*, the Communist daily, was closed, and Khaled Bakdash, the Syrian Communist leader who had returned from Eastern Europe only a few weeks before, was again compelled to disappear.

In Cairo, meanwhile, the newspaper *Akhbar al Yom* (January 3) criticized the Iraqi Communists who "did not know anything about the [Baghdad] coup d'état until after the revolution, and who now brazenly demand to inherit it and who try to destroy all anti-Communist elements: the Arab nationalists should be crushed so that 2,000 Iraqi Communists shall have the chance to rule Iraq."

Hassanein Heykal, Nasser's closest confidant among Cairo editors, put it in a somewhat more conciliatory fashion (*Al Ahram*, January 4): "Communist activity in the Arab world has increased a little of late. In the past, Communist organizations have stood by the nationalist forces in the bitter struggle against imperialism, pacts, imperialist collaborators, and feudalism. The struggle has ended or is about to end. What will be the attitude of the Communists in the future? Will they be deflected from the clear nationalist line in order to raise red flags in the Middle East? Or will they keep their mouths shut?" According to Heykal, Moscow regarded these Communist activities with disfavor; had not Khrushchev himself told Nasser that Soviet sympathy with Arab nationalism was unshakable?

The indications were that the Egyptian rulers had at last realized that Communism had become a formidable danger to their own rule—in Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere. But the question remains: how can they combat Communism without losing Soviet support? For its part Moscow faces a similar dilemma: how to avoid disavowing Communist activities in the Arab world, how to work for Nasser's overthrow in three or five years without antagonizing him now. It is a difficult political problem which deserves attention, for much the same dilemma faces the Soviet leaders in their contacts with nationalists throughout Asia and Africa.

IN THE last years of Stalin's rule, Moscow was quite hostile to the so-called "national bourgeoisie," the leaders of the national movements of the East. A gradual change began in 1953, culminating in 1955 in the "Spirit of Bandung," the Khrushchev-Bulganin trip to India, and the Soviet rapprochement with the Arabs. The Soviets were now willing on the whole to cooperate closely with the "awakening East" regardless of the class character of the leaders of the Eastern movements. For the "national bourgeoisie" and its representatives (Nehru, Sukarno, Nasser)—so the ideological argument ran—still fulfilled a progressive function, in contrast to the Western bourgeoisie, which was beyond redemption.

This political approach has been pursued actively for four years now and has reaped an abundant harvest: Soviet economic, political, and cultural ties with non-committed nations have been strengthened; Soviet and Communist prestige have increased greatly; important political support has been given by Asian countries to various initiatives of Soviet foreign policy. Yet, from the very beginning it was obvious to Moscow that a policy of befriending non-Communist movements in the East had distinct limitations. It could help to neutralize such nations as India, Indonesia, and Egypt; but it could not swing these countries into the Soviet bloc.

It would be premature to say that all the possibilities of the Bandung spirit and the various Afro-Asian solidarity committees have been exhausted, but there are many indications that the Soviet advance in the East has slowed down. From Laos to Ghana, Asian and African statesmen have recently begun to attack the Communists and to take administrative measures against them. Nehru was attacked (albeit in a polite way by Soviet standards) in a long article in the new Cominform monthly, and Nasser turned against the Arab Communists. As Hassanein Heykal naively put it: "The Communists

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did good service in the struggle against imperialism, but now the struggle is over, and they should shut up."

Nobody in Moscow had ever assumed that a Communist India or Indonesia or Egypt ever would be built under the leadership of the "national bourgeoisie." Even in the heyday of Soviet-Arab friendship, an authoritative Soviet spokesman, Konstantin Ivanov, wrote (*Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*, No. 3, 1958) that "as Marxists we do not want to make a fetish of Arab unity, and do not want to close our eyes to the fact that it may be exploited temporarily to impede the progressive development of the Arab peoples" (i.e., their development toward Communism). In contrast to many Asian politicians, the Soviet leaders never assumed that the alliance with Asian and African nationalism would last forever; on the day that the local Communists became strong enough to take over from the nationalists, they would reach the parting of the ways. This conclusion (reached by Ivanov) represents the ideal theoretical solution from the Communist point of view.

In practice, the nationalist-Communist alliance tended to fall apart earlier. Asian and African nationalist leaders may not be very experienced, but they have a sound sense of political self-preservation; sooner or later, they perceive the growth of a menace to their own rule.

In this context, Iraq is an exception. For the Soviets it represents a lucky combination of an explosive social situation, a strong Communist party which (unlike its rivals) emerged intact from underground, and extraordinary incompetence on the part of the ruling military junta. Even so, a Communist victory in Iraq would be a mixed blessing from the Soviet standpoint, for it would almost automatically provoke an anti-Communist reaction elsewhere in the Arab world. In effect, it would make Communist progress more difficult.

We may assume, therefore, that the Iraqi comrades will be advised to take a back seat, to wield effective power behind the scenes rather than ostentatiously demonstrate their strength. There is precedent for this tactic. In Bulgaria, the Communists shared power for several years after 1944 with the Zveno, a group of officers who were permitted to stay in the limelight and maintain the fiction of a national front. From Moscow's standpoint, this prescription is indicated in Iraq as well. Nevertheless, one may doubt that it would work for any appreciable length of time. For the Communists in an underdeveloped country are the most dynamic party; either they make constant progress, or they lose followers. Their leaders can perhaps be restrained, but discipline is not the chief characteristic of the rank and file, which for the most part joined the party only recently.

RELATIONS with Egypt also pose problems for Moscow. To break with Nasser now would be inopportune: though the Communist movement in Syria is of considerable importance, the party has little influence as yet in Cairo—which matters much more. The Soviet leaders may be able to maintain friendly, even cordial relations with Nasser, who needs them as much as they need him. For one thing, the UAR's economic dependence on Communist-bloc trade and grants is unlikely to diminish in the near future. More important, Nasser simply cannot switch to a pro-Western orientation overnight after having made his career on an anti-Western platform.*

Thus, Nasser and his colleagues will continue to act as if Communism and the Soviet Union had nothing to do with each other, and Moscow will—up to a point—behave as if that assumption were correct. (Nasser remains useful to the Russians so long as he does not arrive at a complete rapprochement with the West.) However, events in the Middle East have a momentum of their

*There is simply no analogy here to the position of Tito in 1948. Tito and his comrades were fighting for political and physical survival; an approach to the West was the only way out for them. Nasser, on the other hand, is still being wooed by the Soviet Union; his attacks on domestic Communists did not cause the Russians to stop their aid for the high dam at Aswan.

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own. The emergence of an openly Communist regime in Iraq, and the spread of Communism elsewhere, would certainly weaken Nasser's position and affect his relations with the USSR. What he would do then is anybody's guess. He might ask Washington to intervene in a last-minute attempt to save his position, as Camille Chamoun did in Lebanon last summer. But he might try to outmaneuver his Communist rivals by moving even closer to the Soviet Union.

We must remember that the differences between Communists and nationalists in the East, and particularly in the Arab world, are much less clear-cut in real life than in textbooks. Asian Communists are not real Marxists by Western standards; their basic tenet is anti-imperialism, a theory (or emotion) that is by no means a Communist preserve. On the other hand, Nasser and many other leaders of the Arab national movement do not really qualify, by either background or outlook, as "representatives of the national bourgeoisie." Improbable as it may appear, it is not impossible that some of the petty-bourgeois nationalists will decide to join the Soviet camp if they realize the tide is running against them, or if they think it would serve their own interest or that of their people. Such an outcome would largely depend on the Communists themselves—on how painless the transition could be made.

A SURVEY of Western reactions to all this should best begin with West Germany and Italy. In these two countries, business circles, political journalists, and some diplomats have been talking for several years about their special mission in the Arab world. Some of the less discreet writers even mentioned the prestige formerly enjoyed by the Axis powers among the Arabs. Colonel Nasser has had an excellent press in both Germany and Italy, and the new Iraqi government was warmly welcomed. Such Middle East experts of the Nazi era as Giselher Wirsing declared that Washington had been stupid to cold-shoulder Nasser, the West's great hope in the Middle East.

Now, there is much less optimism in West Germany and Italy. The businessmen were first to feel the pinch. Instead of increasing their trade and strengthening their positions in Iraq, the West Germans and Italians were among the first to be squeezed out. And Colonel Nasser informed the West Germans that the Russians would have a monopoly as far as the first stage of the Aswan Dam was concerned: German economic assistance was not desired.

In other European countries, the appraisal of the Middle Eastern situation was somewhat more realistic, largely thanks to the flow of full and reliable information in the press. (If an international Pulitzer Prize for political reporting from the Middle East were being awarded, such Swiss experts as Dr. Hans Tuetsch and Arnold Hoettinger, as well as the contributors to *Le Monde* in Paris, would be worthy recipients.)

In Britain there is a curious split. Public opinion is on the whole anti-Nasser, but many Middle Eastern experts, especially those of the younger generation, advocate a pro-Nasser policy. Of course, the older hands, the Glubbs, Kirkbrides, and Longriggs, still think in terms of Britain's imperial mission, detest the parvenu Nasser and his mendacious propaganda, and cannot forgive the new rulers in Baghdad for having committed high treason and regicide. But the younger generation of commentators (in the *Manchester Guardian,* the *New Statesman,* the *Spectator,* etc.) seems convinced that an accommodation with Nasser is both possible and desirable. They believe with "Caractacus" that "we must deal with the Arabs truthfully, honestly, and sincerely, as we have never done before." Such praiseworthy sentiment is linked with the assumption that the establishment of Israel was a fatal mistake that will end in mass slaughter, and with the belief that those Arab rulers who do not see eye to eye with Nasser (such as Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba) should be discouraged in their opposition. In the writings of these younger commentators, correct, albeit belated, insights appear side by side with a "tough realism"

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that on closer inspection is often revealed as mere opportunism or lack of principle.

The Arab world that Glubb, Kirkbride, and Longrigg knew has passed on, but these old Arab hands did know, at any rate, all that was to be known about Egypt and Jordan in the 1920's. The same does not apply to many correspondents and editors who now interpret the Middle East for influential sections of the British public. (Recent comment, for instance, would lead one to believe that the *New Statesman* had expected the fall of Nuri es-Said; this is by no means correct.*) Their lack of comprehension of the Middle East may be rooted in what Leon Trotsky used to call the curious inability of the Anglo-Saxon political genius to understand the momentum of revolutionary situations. In any case, there is a surprising blindness with regard to the limitations of Colonel Nasser's type of Arab nationalism—particularly in the domestic field—and a consistent tendency to underrate the attraction of Communism for the Arab elites.

Such views have had a certain effect on British public opinion, especially on the left, but it is doubtful that the Foreign Office has been greatly affected. Efforts have been made to normalize relations with Colonel Nasser, and some progress has been made (particularly in the economic field). But it is realized that there are narrow limits to any such realignment, and that there cannot be a reorientation until Colonel Nasser displays some willingness to coexist peacefully with the West.

American policy-makers may have slightly more room to maneuver, but Assistant Secretary of State William M. Rountree learned to his own cost in Baghdad recently that the Communists already rule the streets, and that an agreement with General Kassem's government would be of limited value. The school of thought in the U.S. Foreign Service that favors closer relations with Nasser would probably be more numerous had Nasser not systematically and needlessly humiliated U.S. diplomats in the United Arab Republic. Other American officials have their doubts about Nasser: they would be willing enough to put up with "positive neutralism," but they also remember that it was Nasser who invited the Russians into the Middle East, and they are not certain how much his own regime has already been infiltrated by Communists.

In any case, Washington's freedom of action is limited. Even if the "support Nasser" thesis is accepted, open American help for Nasser in his drive against the local Communists, or in his ambitions for Arab unity under UAR leadership, would be self-defeating; it would be a source of embarrassment to Nasser and play into the hands of the Communists. In the circumstances, American approaches to Nasser must be restricted to the economic and cultural fields, aiming at the normalization of relations until Nasser and the political climate in the UAR are ready for political negotiations and possible agreements.

Israel's thoughts on the current events are unlikely to influence the situation in Baghdad or Cairo, but are nevertheless of some interest. Israelis argue that the degree of Communist domination in Baghdad has been exaggerated; that this is a trick by Nasser's supporters in the West aimed at changing the attitudes of Washington and London toward the UAR; and that, in any case, Nasser is the least likely candidate to combat Soviet influence in the Middle East.

The Israeli reaction is psychologically intelligible: Iraq is relatively far away, and Israeli political and military leaders are supremely concerned about Nasser's tanks,

*Reviewing a book by this writer in the *New Statesman* in July 1956, R. H. S. Crossman, the Labor M.P., quoted with disapproval what appeared to him an unduly pessimistic assessment of the Iraqi situation: "Of all the Arab countries Iraq arouses the strongest feeling of pessimism. The parallel with Czarist Russia is uncomfortably obvious. At the time of writing Communism in Iraq continued to be 'under control'—but it will not remain so for many years, perhaps not for many months." On which Mr. Crossman commented: "Such cocksure predictions are unconvincing. . . . I should have more confidence in Mr. Laqueur's judgment if he had been able to visit Iraq recently and paint the other side of the picture."

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MIGs, and submarines massed on their borders. Nevertheless, Jerusalem's appraisal is incorrect. The news of gradual Communist domination in Baghdad appeared to be a "Red mirage" because it came so suddenly, but Nasser's propagandists did not invent it. Furthermore, Egypt is not the supreme danger. Nasser's policy of needling Israel, of sporadic attacks against border settlements, is extremely annoying, and there is always an outside chance that he will feel compelled to show that he can do more than his Baghdad rivals for the recovery of Arab Palestine. But this seems unlikely at present. In the long run, the emergence of a Communist regime in Iraq and the direct extension of Soviet power to other Arab countries would pose much more formidable problems for Israel than Colonel Nasser.

ONLY some of the major elements in the present struggle for domination in the Arab world have been listed in this survey.*

It is an internal struggle among the Arabs, and loose talk ("it-depends-mainly-on-us," etc.) should be discouraged. The fate of the Arab world, for the first time in centuries, now depends almost exclusively on the Arab leaders themselves. Whether this will remain so for many years is admittedly uncertain.

Already, political power in Iraq has partly passed into Communist hands, though they appear under the cover of a "national union" front and continue to reject the "Communist label" as a baseless calumny spread by imperialist hirelings. The development in Iraq is not irreversible. The Communists may make mistakes—overplay their hand or quarrel with their allies too soon. General Kassem may realize that the forces he helped to unleash are bound to submerge him. He may try to turn against the Communists or, if the situation is desperate, he may even choose to apply to Colonel Nasser for admission to the UAR (as the Syrian leaders did a year ago when they faced insurmountable domestic difficulties).

All this still seems possible, but it is far more likely that the Communists will consolidate their hold over Iraq and extend it to other Arab countries. They may suffer temporary setbacks, but much evidence indicates that they will make further progress, and not only in Iraq. They may choose a discreet and gradual approach, but these tactical considerations do not touch the core of the matter. Should there be a peaceful competition between Nasser's Egypt and a Communist-dominated Iraq, all the odds would favor the latter. Not only do the Communists have the economic know-how the Cairo regime so sadly lacks, but Iraq is a rich country while Egypt is desperately poor and faces almost insoluble economic and social problems.

Those who invoke the spirit of "Arab nationalism" (which, they think, will prevail in the end) fail to realize that it is largely irrelevant to the issues at stake now. The Communists, too, are Arab nationalists. They, too, want Arab unity—but not under Nasser. In a struggle with the Communists, extreme nationalist slogans will help Nasser no more than they did Nuri es-Said. The Communists know that game, too; ever since Hitler, they have not allowed themselves to be outdone in nationalist demagoguery.

A Communist victory in Iraq would be a blow to the West and its repercussions would adversely affect the international balance of power. Whether it would also be a disaster for the Iraqis is less certain. The Communists may conceivably succeed in solving some of the economic and social problems other Arab governments failed to tackle. There would be much oppression, but there always has been; many Iraqis, at any rate, are willing to give the Communists a chance.

*No mention has been made, for instance, of the Kurdish problem, another potential source of conflict. A London Communist publishing house has just seen fit to publish a book (*Kurdistan, Divided Nation of the Middle East*, by S. S. Gavan) in which the old idea of an independent Kurdish state is again propagated. Relations between Kurdis and Iraqis (and even between Kurdi and Iraqi Communists) are so complicated as to defy description here.

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GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT IN BRONXVILLE

The "Holy Square Mile"

HARRY GERSH

BRONXVILLE, New York, is a pleasant, handsome suburban village in lower Westchester County, fifteen miles north of New York City. In most respects it differs little from other fashionable metropolitan suburbs, although the average income seems somewhat higher, the residents more homogeneous, the schools superior. Photographers use the Bronxville railroad station as a backdrop for advertising pictures and TV commercials, but Larchmont's station is used more often. Bronxville's business district is restrained and architecturally consistent, but Scarsdale's is more so. Bronxville, however, is unique in one respect. It doesn't like Jews and won't admit them as residents.

There are other areas in Westchester, Nassau, and other suburban counties around New York which try to stay demonstrably "Aryan." But these are places without sharply defined boundaries; their exclusionary practices are being steadily eroded. Bronxville, on the other hand, is an incorporated village, with legal boundaries within which Jews are unwelcome, except as visitors or customers. And Bronxville continues to enforce its anti-Semitic pattern though it lies clearly within the metropolitan area in which wholesale discrimination was supposed to have been wiped out.

Bronxville, which is exactly one square mile in area and is known to real estate men as the "Holy Square Mile," is home to about 7,000 people. The village lies on the east bank of the Bronx River, and is bounded by Yonkers on the west, Mt. Vernon on the south, the unincorporated area of Eastchester on the east, and Tuckahoe on the north. Eastchester Township is the parent township of both Bronxville and Tuckahoe villages; but Bronxville ignores the relationship. A majority of voters seem not to know that it exists. Most of Bronxville's men commute to New York on the Harlem Division of the New York Central—a run of thirty minutes. There are no club cars on these trains; Bronxville commuters take their martinis at the Biltmore Men's Bar or at home.

Three north-south through streets cut through the village—Sagamore Road-Kraft Avenue, Midland Avenue, and the White Plains Post Road. There is one east-west thoroughfare, Pondfield Road, which is the business street. Although many Tuckahoe streets are opposite Bronxville streets, and would naturally connect with them, the Bronxville residential streets are dead-ended. This serves as a barrier not only to traffic but to neighborliness. (Tuckahoe's residents include Jews and Negroes.)

Two hills, rising on either side of Midland Avenue, give much of Bronxville a rolling contour, providing most of its homes with pleasant views. The streets are quiet, tree-shaded, and winding. Where an old tree stands in the path of a street, the Bronxville road curves or splits to accommodate it. Village homes are hard-money suburban—Georgian, Colonial, subdued Victorian, Norman, some Elizabethan half-timbered. Most appear to have been built during the two decades preceding and following World War I. The proportion of transplanted Moorish castles, Mission haciendas, Petit Trianons, and similar monstrosities is quite low.

HARRY GERSH describes a personal investigation into anti-Semitic housing practices in a fashionable New York suburb. Mr. Gersh has done public relations for a number of trade unions and government agencies, and is the author of a forthcoming book, *These Are My People*. He lives in Tuckahoe, just across the village line from Bronxville.

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There are a few angular modern homes, which seem out of place among their more sedate neighbors; but there wasn't much space for building left after World War II. Careful zoning restricts the amount of land available for structures.

Bronxville does have a peculiar architectural form—the community house. This is a local adaptation of the row house, a single structure containing from six to fifteen attached individual houses, each with five or six rooms plus tiny front and back yards. In Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Brooklyn, the row house is considered socially inferior to the detached house. In Bronxville, no such social stigma attaches to it. One longtime Bronxville resident explained that "the young people live in the community houses, waiting until they can afford a real house." (Community houses cost about $28,000.) Another villager maintained that the row houses were not only for young families but for bohemians.

Although Bronxville residents include advertising men, TV producers and actors, public relations men, and publishers, the proportion of communications people is lower than in racier communities on Long Island Sound, elsewhere in Westchester, and in Fairfield County. Bronxville, however, does have a strong contingent of industrial and financial executives. Top executives of Standard Oil, National City Bank, International Business Machines, Consolidated Edison, Rogers Peet, Home Insurance, Ward Leonard Electrical have served as mayors and trustees of the village. Several internationally known clergymen also make their homes in Bronxville.

THE village was incorporated in 1898, but it was Bronxville long before that. Its largest church, the Reformed, was opened in 1850. The railroad, then the New York and Harlaem, came to the village in 1846. The entire area was deeded in 1666 to the white man by Gramatan, sachem of the Mahicans, an Algonquin tribe. The local hotel, called the Gramatan, was opened in 1897. (It accepts Jews.) When periodic efforts are made to change the village name (to avoid confusion with the multi-racial Bronx), "Gramatan" is usually one of the alternative names suggested.

A local historian writes that the Hotel Gramatan was frequented in its early days by "those of artistic and literary turn of mind," including William Howe, Herman Schladermundt, Kate Douglas Wiggin, and William Smedley. Later guests included Greta Garbo, Theodore Dreiser, and Peter Lorre. Residents point out old mansions with great expanses of north-light glass as evidence that Bronxville once housed many painters.

The first of the "old" families came to Bronxville in 1835 when Alexander Masterson built a mansion in the village to be near his quarries in Tuckahoe. Another historian dates the village's beginnings from 1863 when Alexander Masterson, Jr., moved his family to Bronxville. In either case, this family set the local pattern: Tuckahoe as the place for working folk, Bronxville for gentlefolk. Today Bronxville's maids, cooks, shopkeepers, gardeners, and plumbers, its policemen, teachers, and garbagemen, still live in Tuckahoe and other surrounding communities. But Bronxville has long had a paternal interest in its hewers and drawers. Louise Masterson, niece of Alexander, Jr., tells how Tuckahoe "was overrun with saloons, and to curtail them, my uncle had built a Temperance Hall in Tuckahoe." Tuckahoe, about three-fifths the size, still has more saloons than Bronxville. On the other hand, Bronxville contributes far more than its numerical percentage to the regional Community Chest. It also has one of the nation's largest chapters of the Daughters of the British Empire.

The village got its real start when William Van Duzer Lawrence bought the 86-acre Prescott farm in 1890. Lawrence, a retired Canadian manufacturing chemist, didn't think much of the land, but "yielded to the urgings of friends who said they would like homes on the Prescott property." (It is not explained why these friends couldn't buy direct from Prescott.) He soon bought

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neighboring tracts as well, and most of the incorporated village is on former Lawrence land. According to a Lawrence Management employee, Lawrence companies still own 97 per cent of the rental housing in the village (including several substantial apartment developments) and 98 per cent of the business area.

William V. D. Lawrence founded, and his heirs still run, Lawrence Investing Company, Lawrence Management Company, Davis and Lawrence, and the Lawrence Park Light, Heat and Power Company. He gave $250,000 to found Lawrence Hospital in 1906—a great deal of money then. He also founded Sarah Lawrence College, named for his wife, and gave it part of his estate just outside Bronxville in Yonkers. Lawrence was closely involved in setting up the college and there is no evidence that he differed with the college's liberal social policy.

As a matter of fact, Lawrence wrote in 1898 that his aim in Bronxville was to assemble "people together who should be congenial in each other's company . . . to select the people who are to live together so that they may have a wholesome respect for each other. Belonging to the same plane of social life, they are working to the same ends, even though they may have different views on politics and religion and other subjects of everyday life."

There is no indication as to whether Lawrence had in mind Jews when he spoke of those who "may have different views on religion." He did live through the first thirty years of the village's incorporated existence, and must have known of its pattern of exclusion. In any event, the homogeneity Lawrence sought and Bronxville has maintained in the three decades since his death is self-perpetuating. In such a group the pressure to conform is greater than in heterogeneous groups, and so are the social penalties for breaking the patterns. Bronxville's social pattern, as we shall see, includes real estate anti-Semitism: to break it is to betray your friends and neighbors, people who would remain friends even after you left Bronxville. The community includes important figures in most industries; to incur their enmity in Bronxville might later cause you trouble on Park Avenue or Wall Street. Rigid enforcement of the rule against Jews does not require the active assistance of the majority of the population, but it does require—and evidently commands—the majority's assent. Finally, the dominance of the Lawrence complex in the real estate of the village, and possibly in other matters, may be a factor in enforcing the "Gentlemen's Agreement."

Bronxville's homogeneity extends to its politics. In 1956 the village gave Eisenhower 3,803 votes to Stevenson's 400. In 1958 the vote for Governor went 3,209 for Nelson Rockefeller to 287 for Averill Harriman. Bronxville also gave the nation troglodyte Congressman Ralph Gwinn, who retired undefeated in 1958, after fourteen years in the House. Mr. Gwinn regards the U.S. Post Office as an example of state socialism, and said so in a speech at Sarah Lawrence College in 1956. Last fall, he had kind words for Arkansas's Governor Faubus.

Bronxville's school system is something else again. The village spends more than $800 per student annually, placing it first or second in the national averages each year. The school system is one of the most progressive in the country—it is, in fact, one of the showplaces of Columbia Teachers College and of Dewey disciples. Comments a village historian: "One of Bronxville's amazing paradoxes is that in a community where conservatism plays a major part in politics, economics, and general philosophy, its school system is one of the most modern in the country. The answer probably lies in the fact that most residents of the village have always belonged to a discriminating [*sic*] category of American citizen who desires the best for his family and most of all for his children. Whereas conservatism in politics seems the best expression of good judgment, conservatism in education would be folly."

But Bronxville's school district, it should be noted, is one of three in Eastchester Township. District One covers the north end of the township, with the boundary

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drawn in such a way as to include most of Tuckahoe's commuter areas and exclude Tuckahoe's Negroes. District Two covers the mid-township, including most of the village of Tuckahoe. District Three's boundaries coincide with the outlines of Bronxville, thus excluding Jews and Negroes.

Lower Westchester county accepts Bronxville's anti-Semitism as a fact of life. I have not heard even of any Jewish organizational protest. A few weeks ago, I decided to test the validity of this acceptance. I decided to try to buy a house in Bronxville.

Examining the Yellow Pages of the telephone directory, I found ten real estate firms listed with addresses inside the "Holy Square Mile," and decided to try five of them at random. I assumed a cover name and a cover story: I was "Harry Greenberg," about to be transferred from Philadelphia to New York and seeking a suburban house. I was under instructions from my wife, a confirmed PTA'er, to buy only in the Bronxville school district. Thus, with a name I assumed would be taken immediately as Jewish, and a strict mandate not to accept a house outside the village, I moved in on Bronxville.

Bronxville's real estate offices range from an august, marble-fronted, family-bank-type temple-of-business, through a charming, white-painted brick cottage complete with fireplace, to an ordinary storefront with too many desks. My reception seemed to vary with the outward appearance of the office. The lady in the bank building greeted me austerely; the lady in the cottage was charming; the man in the storefront was businesslike.

I waited five minutes in the first office before I was noticed. After telling the lady who asked my business that I wished to buy a house, I was ushered into a small room furnished with three chairs and a table. A tall, middle-aged woman, wearing pince-nez and looking like my sixth-grade teacher, entered carrying a large black book.

"I'm looking for a house in Bronxville," I said.

"Yes," she sniffed and looked me over, hat to shoes. I was wearing a suburban-looking hat with a cord band, a gabardine topcoat, tweed jacket with leather patches on the elbows, flannel trousers, Hathaway shirt, and knit tie. I passed inspection.

She asked my name, address, and business address. I said: "Greenberg, Harry Greenberg. I'm from Philadelphia and am being transferred to New York."

Her face fell—no doubt about that. But she opened her book and began leafing through it. "What price did you have in mind?" she asked.

"Oh, about $35,000," I answered. Prior research showed that Bronxville houses didn't come cheaper.

The real estate lady continued turning pages in her book, pointing out items and offering explanations. "No, this one wouldn't do. . . . That one's gone. . . . Here—no, we sold that this morning."

Finally, she found one: "Here's a lovely house. Just what you want. It's about five minutes from the station—on the other side."

"Is it in Bronxville?" I asked.

"Well, it has a Bronxville address."

"But is it in the Bronxville school district?"

"No, but they have an excellent school over there."

I explained that I had instructions from my wife to consider only houses within the Bronxville school district. I acted as though I myself were amenable, and put the onus for my stubbornness on my absent wife.

It continued that way for the rest of the interview: she trying to interest me in a house outside Bronxville (though not very hard), me sticking to my desire for a Bronxville house.

When I insisted on a definitive answer—wasn't there a single house in the entire village?—she went through her book once again. "Well, of course there are some. Here's a house at $55,000, but it has only three bedrooms. And we have several more in the high fifties and sixties."

Consideration of a house costing $20,000 more than my original price would have looked suspicious, so I thanked her and left.

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My next stop was in a large, well-appointed suite that looked like an estate office. The woman who received me was pleasant and helpful. I told her my name, but it seemed to make no impression. She had plenty of houses in my price range—which now started at $40,000.

We went out and looked at six houses within $12,000 of my stated price. Some were quite pleasant, although $10,000-$20,000 over-priced by non-Bronxville standards. As she drove me through the village, the agent pointed out the school, library, the pleasant streets, beautiful homes, the field club ("open to residents, but of course it's a membership club and you have to be voted in"). She spoke of the Women's Club, the country club, and other glories of Bronxville. During this trip I found that I couldn't interrupt the lady without raising my voice; she was hard of hearing. I wondered if she had heard my name and what I could do about it.

On our way back we passed the lovely Bronxville Reformed Church. "We have a Catholic Church," she said, "a Lutheran Church, an Episcopalian Church, and this is the Reformed Church. But it has a Presbyterian minister and it's really a community church. Everyone goes there."

This was the opening I sought. "We are Jewish," I said in a loud, clear voice. She didn't say another word until we stopped in front of her office. We carried on the rest of our business seated in the car.

As soon as we had parked, she launched into a paean of praise about Scarsdale, four or five miles north. She spoke about Scarsdale's beauty, its excellent school system, the friendliness of its people, its size—which would give me a far greater choice of houses. I insisted that my wife wanted Bronxville. She broadened her field, and told me what beautiful homes could be purchased just outside Bronxville, for half the prices asked in the village. I insisted that one of the houses we had seen in the village impressed me, and that I wanted to bring my wife out to see it. This left the agent with only one choice, obviously unpleasant.

"Mr. . . . eh."

"Greenberg," I reminded her.

"Mr. Greenberg, you want me to be frank," she began.

I admitted I preferred frankness.

"Then I have to tell you that you wouldn't be comfortable here in Bronxville. There are no Jewish people in the village."

Some phrases have become so clichéd that you don't expect to hear them from normally aware persons. "Some of my best friends are Jews" is one which I heard several times that day, and this agent was the first to use it.

"Some of my best friends are Jews," she said. "And I wouldn't want you to be hurt. It's not even you and your wife so much. You're probably used to it. But your children. You know how cruel children can be. Think of your son and daughter exposed to the cruelty of the other children."

She kept on long after she should have stopped. "Now you're nice people. You wouldn't want to live in Tuckahoe." (We do live in Tuckahoe, and it was rather disconcerting to get the Bronxville view.) "It's mostly Negro and Italian." (We have fair percentages of both groups, and families of Jewish, Irish, English, German, and Scandinavian background as well—a Fourth of July orator's dream.) "But you would love Scarsdale. The people are just like those in Bronxville, but it's mixed, as it should be."

Trying to ease the situation, she explained that it wasn't the old Bronxville families who objected to Jews, but the "new rich." (This doesn't square with the fact that Jews couldn't buy in Bronxville in the years before the "new rich" got rich.) Her clincher was probably a subconscious reaction to my open avowal of Jewishness. "Besides," she said, "Scarsdale's taxes are much lower." (They aren't.) The poor woman insisted that I let her call a friend in Scarsdale who would take good care of me and find me a real bargain. I finally agreed to look him up.*

*As a matter of fact, there are some tight little neighborhoods in Scarsdale with gentlemen's agreements, but they do not have the cover of a political entity. It's not socially correct in Scarsdale to be openly exclusionary, at least as regards houses. The difference is in degree.

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The next agent, a decent, older man, took me to see several houses in my declared price range even after he knew my name as "Greenberg." But the only house available for immediate sale had six small rooms, stood on a small plot, and cost $45,000. A buyer would have to be desperate to swallow it at that price.

Back at the office, the real estate man explained his position: "I'm in the real estate business and I'll try to sell you any house on my list. After that, I'll try to see that the sale is closed. But whether you'll be happy here if you do buy is another matter. Bronxville is 100 per cent Christian. You won't be comfortable."

I asked him how he knew this; whether it wasn't an old pattern being continued through inertia; whether a Jew wouldn't be decently received if he did try to settle. The real estate man had an answer to these questions, too.

"A couple of years ago a rich Jewish family did buy a house in Bronxville. They bought it direct from the builder." (I took this to mean that the sale would not have been consummated had the buyer approached a real estate agent rather than an out-of-village builder.) "But the family stayed less than a year. I had the house for resale, and the man told me they hadn't been comfortable in the village."

I thanked him for his frankness and moved on. The story from the next agent was that there just wasn't anything available in the village. It was the wrong season—before Christmas. No one, I was told, puts his house up for sale before the holiday season; they don't want a bunch of strangers trooping through the house; spring is a better time. If I needed a house in a hurry, I had better look elsewhere (where, presumably, people did not mind strangers tracking through their houses).

The fifth agent was most charming. She told me about her family, her grandchildren, her Thanksgiving dinner. She wrote down my name and asked whether we spelled it with an "h." This confused me. Then I remembered that Eastchester's neighbor to the northwest is Greenburgh Township—and it wasn't named after a Jew. I disclaimed the Aryanizing "h," but it was obvious that the real estate woman hadn't made the connection.

We went the rounds again—some of the houses I had already seen, and some new ones. I saw the pleasant streets again, the business district, the school, and the library. When we passed the Reformed Church, the agent gave me the same listing I had heard a few hours before.

"We have a Catholic Church, Episcopalian, Lutheran, and this is the Reformed Church. But they have a Presbyterian minister and everyone goes here. It is a community church."

On that note, I made my ploy: "We are Jewish."

"Oh," she said.

Back at her office, I heard once more that I was an intelligent man and therefore I would want her to be frank. She did not want us to be hurt, she continued, particularly the children. "In the entire 'Holy Square Mile,' I am sure there isn't one Jew," she said.

She was effusive in her wonder at how well I took this disappointment. Then she asked if I knew Dr. X, a psychoanalyst, who lived in the township. He had come to her for a house in Bronxville, just as I had, and when she had explained things to him, he had been most understanding and allowed her to sell him a house in Eastchester—outside the village.

"It's a lovely house," she said, "almost an estate. And we have become good friends. I was invited to the housewarming. It was lovely. And I was the only Irishman there. Oh, what wonderful food they had."

Here, in a shiny nutshell, was the entire stereotype—the doctor-Jew, a symbol of cleverness; the riches, his "estate"; the clannishness, she was the only "Irishman" there; the exotic-outlandishness, expressed in the food symbol.

I said goodbye and went home—one mile due north of her office. On our street are

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twenty-four houses. About half of the families living in them are Catholic; perhaps eight are Protestant; four are Jewish. No one has indicated any economic, social, or recreational disadvantage in living near us.

Some time later, I asked a non-Bronxville real estate operator what would have happened had I insisted on buying one of the houses that had been shown to me. He assured me that the deal would have fallen through at some point. By the time I could get my wife up to see the house, it would have been sold or taken off the market. If I had insisted on putting down a binder immediately, the agent would have accepted it subject to the owner's approval—which would not have been given. And, if I had passed these and a few other hurdles, I might have had trouble getting a local mortgage at favorable terms.

One Bronxville resident took issue with the conclusions I drew from my experiences with the real estate agents. They did not speak for all Bronxville, he argued. His argument did not impress me. Real estate operators are in business to make money. One, two, or even three of the five I visited might be so bigoted as to refuse to do business with a Jew. But their unanimity, as well as their *ex parte* comments, showed that more than real estate agents' prejudices were involved. These people were expressing a community feeling, following instructions from community leaders who could enforce them. The Jew who bought a house from a builder, and then had to move, was not made "uncomfortable" by real estate agents.

ALTHOUGH several Bronxville real estate agents had said that the village was 100 per cent non-Jewish, I made another test. I studied the Bronxville telephone book. After digging out all Jewish-sounding names, I checked addresses with the police station to throw out those living outside the village boundary. I was left with four names which sounded Jewish. I surveyed these by telephone. I reached three.

One said, "I am a member of the Dutch Reformed Church."

Another said, "We are Protestant."

The third actually was Jewish. But he was a shopkeeper and didn't live in the village.

This is not a scientific determination. The familiar-name method was proved to be at least 25 per cent off in a survey of medical school students. Many Jews do not have what we assume to be Jewish-sounding names, and the other way round. Possibly there are some Jews in Bronxville, with non-Jewish names. But none of the Bronxvillians I asked, in addition to the real estate people, could name one. Several said, "There must be," but couldn't produce any when pressed.

The telephone book offered still another test. The classified section lists 130 physicians. Seven have possibly Jewish names. Only one has a Bronxville address. Thirty dentists are listed. Two names sound conceivably Jewish. One might have a Bronxville address. Again, this is not legal proof. Those with Jewish-sounding names may not be Jewish, and those with non-Jewish names may be. But as a rule of thumb in this second half of the 20th century, any community around New York City with a substantial number of physicians and dentists and no Jews among them, has made a determined effort to remain *Judenrein*.

I also discussed my experiences with a professional schoolman with an intimate knowledge of the Bronxville school system. He insisted that Bronxville schools did have an occasional Negro student, the child of a resident maid, and that the child was well received by his "peers." He remembered some Jewish children, too, but admitted that they were few and far between. Bronxville did employ Jewish teachers, he said, and they were respected by the students. (I checked his statement that there had been some Jewish children in school by looking through the high school yearbooks from 1950 to 1958. During these years there were five students with possible Jewish names, though they could just as well have been German.)

When I offered the socio-psychological thesis on which the Supreme Court based its desegregation order—that segregation,

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even with equal facilities, is bad for the children of both the segregated and the segregating groups—he said that he had seen no evidence of this among Bronxville's students. Bronxville's graduates, he maintained, were as "liberal" (his word) as their peers from more heterogeneous schools.

Despite this educator's informed view, his statement is open to serious question. Most children growing up in a community which openly says "we do not want Jews as neighbors" come to accept this attitude as right and just. Certainly, some children will question it, as they question all the verities propounded by their parents. But most do not examine too deeply. They accept the gentlemen's agreement and assume that it is one of the things that makes Bronxville living so pleasant—like having money, cars, servants, and straight teeth. There remains the disturbing possibility that if, on leaving Bronxville, they should ever lack money or cars or servants, they may decide to blame their deprivations on having to live among Jews.

FOUR MIDRASHIM FOR THE PASSOVER

LESLIE A. FIEDLER

The Four Sons

Four sons only says the Law
Spring from all the seed we sow;
Wise or wicked, foolish, dumb
Suffice to name whatever son.

Wise one, ask that I may still
Recite what asking you know well.
Only what is known is learned;
Bow, be bored and yield the turn.

Wicked, cry in scorn: "Why yet
Remember to remember death!"
Out of bondage when I pass
You shall be the slave of *was*.

Foolish, slobber as you seek
To hear what you cannot repeat.
The Law demands that I expend
My breath though no one understand.

Dumb innocence, you plead the best
For vain expenditure of breath:
To give the gift without a use,
Each year just once to say the truth.

Four sons only says the Law
Spring from all the seed we sow;
Wise and wicked, foolish, dumb
Suffice to name my father's son.

The Four Questions

Why is this night different from others,
The bread broken poor bread,
The lines spoken cribbed from dead
Fathers, the wine drunk four times, mothers

Permitting? Why is this night different,
Yeastless, only ceaseless prayers
Rising—greens dipped twice in tears,
Timeless? Why are the long absent present?

Why do we go out of Egypt?
Why are we forever there?
Why is it God himself who goads us?
Why do I ask who do not care?

Why is this night different, why leaning
Are old men different, kings
Of crumbs and wine-soaked napkins,
Singing? What do they think they are
meaning,

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Touching the egg, brown bone, the bitter
Herbs, howling through open doors
The hopeless, unheard curse?
No prophet enters, only dying winter. . . .

Why do we go out of Egypt?
Why are we forever there?
Why is it God himself who goads us?
Why do I ask who do not care?

The Four Cups

Two cups we drink before our meat
to make us mad enough to greet
the miracle each spring achieves
but masks in modesty with leaves
two times we touch our lips to wine
before we open them to dine.

Two cups we drink before we sing
the lovesong of the foolish king
whose foolishness is counted wise
two cups to wet the throat for praise
two times and two the throat is wet
before we put the kids to bed.

By this we know and show no more
than two and two make four make four.

The Four Fathers

For each son there is a father:
The "as-if," "yes-but" or "rather"
From which he began; Abraham,
Who lied that his soul might live,
Will do (while Jews last) for "as-if."
For "rather" bland Isaac's the man,
God's chosen who passed to the ram.

"Yes-but" is Jacob, the wrestler,
Who wore for election's sake fur
Of his brother, mocking the beast
He could not best in the womb.
Joseph is silence, buried, dumb;
He brought us to Egypt, to feast
After famine, less father than son.

God, why did we come!
God, why did we come!

Leslie A. Fiedler has been a contributor since the early days of Commentary. His essay on a "Seder in Rome" appeared in our April 1954 number.

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A POLITICS OF PEACE

Reflections on C. Wright Mills's "The Causes of World War III"

H. STUART HUGHES

FOR the past decade C. Wright Mills has been a very special phenomenon on the American intellectual horizon. As the author of three probing and impassioned studies of our contemporary society—the series beginning with *The New Men of Power* and running through *White Collar* to *The Power Elite*—he has bulked too large to be dismissed out of hand. Yet no one—neither scholar nor publicist—seems to have known quite how to take him. Thus the reception of his books has always been unpredictable: it has oscillated wildly between academic boycott and *succès de scandale*, with little in between in the way of serious consideration of his ideas in their own terms. More than anything else it has been a reaction of embarrassment. For what chiefly distinguishes Mr. Mills is his talent for writing about embarrassing things in an embarrassing fashion.

A moralist who has chosen to put on the ill-fitting garment of the systematic theoretician of society, Mr. Mills is a sport and a deviant among American sociologists. His colleagues quite correctly belabor him for his imprecise research methods and his weakness for emotional language. And he has returned the compliment by taxing *them* for their failure to deal with really large social issues. "The poor man's David Riesman," he has sometimes been called, and the epithet, for all the injustice it does to both men, is substantially accurate. It suggests that both are concerned with assessing the new type of American society whose outlines have emerged in the past twenty or thirty years—a society variously characterized in terms of "mass," "conformity," "other-direction," or "suburbia." In the same fashion the comparison draws attention to the things that radically separate the two men: Riesman directs his attention primarily to the new middle class, his tone is urbane and humorous, and he finds positive possibilities for individual "autonomy" in the social changes he sees going on around him; Mills has an unfashionable concern for the urban poor, his tone is angry and explosive, and he is quite sure that the current course of events is both depressing and dangerous.

At the very least, Mr. Mills has had something important to say in every one of his books. It has frequently been spun out at unnecessary length, but as present standards of writing go, the net result has been an extraordinary achievement. His has been the role of the naughty little boy blurting out the truth about the emperor's disarray, and he has played the part with gusto. Hence it is a considerable intellectual event when he comes at last to say his piece on the state of our country's foreign relations.

Mr. Mills's new book, *The Causes of World War Three*,* is just as dishevelled as its predecessors. If anything, it is even more disorganized and repetitious. Once again we find the same old Mills weaknesses—a cumbersome style, cluttered with unnecessary sociological verbiage, a windy, hortatory tone, and an alternation between over-compactness and tedious elaboration in argument. Like his other works, this one gives the impression of having been written in a rush—although his friends know that Mr.

*Simon and Schuster, 172 pp., $3.50.

Is THERE an alternative to the bi-partisan foreign policy framed by Dean Acheson and John Foster Dulles? H. STUART HUGHES, professor of history at Harvard, sketches one here. The author of *Consciousness and Society*, Professor Hughes has written frequently for COMMENTARY in the past five years; his "De Gaulle in Power" appeared in our September 1958 number.

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Mills actually takes great pains with his writing. Basically the problem seems to lie in some irremediable difficulty of mental formation; the thought emerges in massive, indigestible blobs—it is constitutionally unable to flow clearly or evenly.

Yet once again, as in the past, in *The Causes of World War Three* Mr. Mills has something arresting and important to say. And once again it is something that no one else seems to be saying—or at least in so forthright and explicit a fashion. In a year that has seen the Lebanon intervention, the flareup over Quemoy, and the reopening of the Berlin question, a book of this sort deserves something more than the barely polite brush-off that it has been getting from some of the critics.

STRIPPED of its digressions and the occasional theoretical disquisitions that adorn it, Mr. Mills's argument runs as follows: within American society and government as they are now organized—just as in the Soviet system—there exist a "thrust" and a "drift" toward war that are all but irresistible. This thrust is clearly implied in the metaphysical assumptions underlying American public discourse. It is apparent in the "crackpot realism" that judges every issue in terms of military competition—and yet has "no image of what 'victory' might mean, and no idea of any road to victory." It is condoned and excused with conventional phrases about "fate," "good intentions," and problems too big for the human mind to master. For this sort of justification of intellectual and moral mediocrity, Mr. Mills has nothing but outraged scorn. "Not 'fate' but doctrinaire incompetence," he argues, "is leading mankind into the great trap."

If things go wrong with us—as they do most of the time—then someone should be held accountable. In place of the "dead-beat notion of 'tragic responsibility' "—a theologian's trick for shifting the blame from individuals to vaguer collectivities—we need a clear view of who our leaders are and what it is that they are up to. Thus Mr. Mills is led right back to the major themes of his *Power Elite*. Our rulers, he reminds us, are no longer the sort of people that the American political tradition presupposes—small-town lawyers and such-like local "notables." Today they are much more likely to be military figures or large corporation executives. Indeed, it is an informal coalition of these two groups that currently dominates American government and public life. And the two other elements that logically should limit and control this power concentration are both lacking—a "professional senior civil service" and an alert, well-informed public. In place of the former, we have routine administrators without the social status and the sense of corporate solidarity essential to their job; where the latter should be, we have a vast realm of indifference sporadically mobilized to advance a few "entrenched and provincial demands." "More and more, fundamental crises never come to any point of decision before the Congress, much less before the electorate in party campaigns."

The political parties have defaulted. They no longer perform their function of "representing and clarifying alternative policies." The press and the other mass media are even more obviously in default. Hence a greater responsibility than ever has fallen on the independent intellectuals. But when we come to look at these, we find that they too are shirking their job. Most of them are no longer truly independent: an enormous proportion of the natural scientists are tending the government-financed "science machine" that exists primarily for war purposes; their colleagues in the social and humanistic disciplines perform as amateur Machiavellis, skilled at clothing the realities of power in the rhetoric of liberalism. And the clergy are even more shockingly unequal to their task: they seem to have become incapable of strong moral reaction to the assumptions of mass obliteration underlying American military policy—witness the almost total absence of protest against American pilots' napalm bomb tactics, the "petroleum-jelly broiling of children and women and men" during the Korean war.

But for all the fault he finds in them, it

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is to the intellectuals and the clergy that Mr. Mills directs his appeal. They alone, he argues, can restore the *radical* spirit to American public life—can replace the flabby accommodations of present-day liberalism with something that has bite and character. They alone can begin to return what is *partisan* and *divisive* (the italics are Mr. Mills's own) to the center of the public stage from which the politics of national consensus has for so long barred it. The intellectuals' influence, Mr. Mills grants, is not very great. But he finds it considerably greater than most intellectuals imagine. And this influence, he asserts, will automatically increase if the professors and writers themselves begin to act *as though* their voices might carry to a wide public. "Each of us," he pleads, "ought to act as if he were a political party." Each should "act on the assumption" that he is "called upon to state issues, to judge men and events, to formulate policies" on all major public questions.

Hence the program with which Mr. Mills concludes his book is one of spiritual demobilization on the part of the intellectuals. It is a call for each of them to make his "own separate peace" with his opposite numbers in Communist-dominated or neutralist lands. It includes a whole series of novel and imaginative measures for promoting cultural exchange, for lifting ideological barriers, and for developing technical and educational facilities in formerly colonial areas. Underlying it all, and sometimes only implied in the argument, is a demand for progressive *unilateral* disarmament on the part of the United States.

It is here that the average reader will doubtless throw up his hands. And it is here that I personally find myself at a sticking point. Thus this is the logical place for a shift from recapitulation to analysis, for an attempt to separate the good sense from the fantasy in Mr. Mills's compelling argument.

Most of Mr. Mills's dissection of our current situation I find quite unexceptionable. Take out the note of anger and of outrage (and perhaps it is impossible to write of such desperately serious matters without an undercurrent of emotion stealing in) and you have a chillingly accurate diagnosis of our present ills. Our country is indeed "an overdeveloped society full of ugly waste and the deadening of human sensibility, honoring ignorance and the cheerful robot, pronouncing the barren doctrine and submitting gladly, even with eagerness, to the uneasy fun of a leisureless and emptying existence." It *is* true that "in structural trend and in official action" the United States and the Soviet Union are becoming "increasingly alike." It *is* true that nearly all our present leaders are smug incompetents. It *is* true that an effective public opinion has almost ceased to exist. It *is* true that most of our intellectuals are timid specialists without the imagination to give warning of the abyss toward which we are heading.

I do not know whether it is actually the case that an interlocking directorate of generals and large business executives wields the decisive influence in most of our public concerns. But nothing that I have observed in the past half decade would lead me to argue the contrary. Nowhere have I found a convincing refutation of the underlying thesis of Mr. Mills's *The Power Elite*. By this I do not mean to suggest that there has been any sort of concerted conspiracy on the part of the military and the leadership of the major industrial corporations—and I do not believe that Mr. Mills means to suggest anything of the sort. I think that this process has been a hit-or-miss affair, arising from a fortuitous similarity of view on the part of the two groups in question and from a vast default on the part of nearly everybody else. But however unplanned this take-over of authority may have been, it is undeniable that the net result is a situation in which the overwhelming majority of our leaders accept (and indeed have a kind of vested interest in) the metaphysic of the arms race and of the permanent cold war.

Where I begin to differ from Mr. Mills is in finding "thrust" (in his own sense of "explicit decisions") far less important than "drift" in the current course of our foreign

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relations. Here the lessons of last September's crisis over Quemoy are extremely instructive. It was "drift" rather than anything consciously planned that got us into the dangerous position in which we found ourselves at the end of the past summer. We drifted—or defaulted—into a situation in which Chiang Kai-shek was in effect making our policy for us. And the way we got out of this mess was equally unplanned. After three weeks of apathy, the more articulate segment of the American public was suddenly brought up short by a visceral reaction of fear. And the resulting cry of alarm was sharp enough to awake even the drowsy sachems of the Democratic party, whose daydreams were fixed on electoral triumph in November and who did not want these prospects disturbed by any inconvenient foreign crisis. The danger of war passed—but without benefit of much conscious choice on the part either of government or of opposition.

Among other things, the events of last September suggest that the American public is not quite so invertebrate and impotent as Mr. Mills has described it. These events also suggest that the drift toward war is still capable of being stopped. But the manner in which it was stopped on this last occasion arouses questions of a quite different sort from those to which Mr. Mills has directed his attention. A reaction of fear is not particularly reassuring as the best that the American public can muster. It suggests a national temper of incompatible extremes—of apathy alternating with near-hysteria—of sudden and violent shifts from rally-round-the-flag to peace-at-any-price. Such a state of mind is scarcely conducive to balanced judgments in the realm of foreign relations. It means that all of us—both leaders and led—are finding it nearly impossible to reach a clear-eyed assessment of where we stand. An alternation between truculence and panic is just about the worst possible position from which to make the crucial choices that currently confront us.

Why have we allowed ourselves to drift into so dangerous a pass? I think it is because we have become the prisoners of our own propaganda. We have come to believe what the public relations experts have told us—to believe it, that is, until all of a sudden a brutal revelation of the truth has plunged us from euphoria into despair. I doubt whether there has ever been in the history of modern democracy so yawning a gap between the official story and the reality—between public rhetoric and private knowledge. Take once again the crisis over Quemoy. The official talk was of "holding the line" for the West in Asia: we were handed the well-worn tale of the domino blocks that would all come tumbling down if a single little one were pulled away. The truth of the matter was that there was scarcely any Western line to be held: our European allies were against us; among the Asian nations that backed us there was only the Philippines that really counted; we were exposed "naked to our enemies" as a rich, pampered country, hated and envied, isolated by our doctrinaire devotion to capitalism in a world of poverty and over-population in which single-party, more or less socialist states were rapidly becoming the norm.

Obviously what we need more than anything else is an alternative view of international reality to set against the one handed down by official spokesmen and by most of the press. Mr. Mills presents the elements of such a view, but it comes out in fragments scattered among his central observations about the "drift" and "thrust" toward war. I should like to piece together these comments, adding to them a few of my own, in an effort to present a coherent summary of where we stand today.

Let us start with Europe. Here the basic fact that is not being made clear to the American public is that Communism no longer presents the danger that it did ten years ago. Since the coup d'état of February 1948 in Czechoslovakia, international Communism has made no advances *in Europe*. Indeed, it has retreated in one form or another in at least three places—Yugoslavia, Austria, and Poland. The two great Communist parties of France and Italy—the only

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two parties of any importance outside the Communist-dominated countries themselves —are both in a state of decrepitude. They have kept their massive voting strength and their ability to insulate their following from the main course of the national life. But they have proved themselves unable to mobilize this following for any active purposes of their own choosing: it has become a frozen, inert mass—little more. It has lost its head and its heart—nearly all its leading intellectuals and the moral force that once inspired it to devotion and sacrifice. Of these changed circumstances the Soviet leaders themselves seem to be well aware: their passivity toward the advent of de Gaulle suggests a kind of weary defeatism. And in East Germany also, ever since the outbreaks of June 1953 revealed the shakiness of Communist control, they have apparently been casting around for some face-saving device for divesting themselves of an almost worthless satellite.

THUS the first corollary to this view of the decay of Communism in Western and Central Europe is a new look at the German problem. Currently we are stuck fast on the old Adenauer line—the insistence that unification can come only through unfettered elections, with the resulting all-German state free to choose a foreign policy of military alliance with the West. We refuse even to discuss the Soviet proposal for a federation of the two Germanies and the subsequent neutralization of the country. But in this uncompromising attitude we are becoming more and more isolated, even among our friends. Aside from the old Chancellor himself—whose tenure of power cannot be eternal, although it has already extended far longer than anyone believed possible—few Germans are left who are totally unwilling to entertain the Soviet proposals. And the same is true of the British: while Labor is vehement about it, and the Conservatives more discreet, both parties agree on the necessity for a major revision of Western policy toward Germany.

Under these circumstances, it is worthwhile—indeed imperative—to see if the Russian project is really the trap for Western innocents that it is conventionally supposed to be. Here once again, it seems to me, we are falling into a line of reasoning that has done us much harm in the past—the notion that our Communist adversaries are infinitely cleverer than we are and that it is always they who will be the gainers in a solution of compromise. Isn't this a game that two can play? And don't we in this particular case hold the stronger cards? Certainly a federation between the two German states would mean for the immediate future the retention of Communist domination and Communist institutions in the Eastern part. But would this arrangement necessarily be permanent? I do not think so, and I do not believe that the Soviet leaders think so either. In any federation the stronger partner is almost bound to achieve an eventual predominance. And in Germany as it is now constituted the Western part has two-thirds of the area, three-quarters of the population, and the bulk of the industrial resources. Eventually such a preponderance could scarcely fail to make itself felt: the pressure of neighboring example would become irresistible. The *economic* structure in the East might remain socialized, but the *political* institutions and practices would sooner or later begin to evolve in a liberal direction.

The same considerations apply in the military sphere. Surely the American position in Europe today is such as to make us wonder whether a unified and neutralized Germany might not be a worthwhile exchange for the military ally we now have in its western part. NATO is barely holding together; most Germans are more than doubtful whether they want to be armed (or defended by others) with nuclear warheads and guided missiles; and the American-manned bases in Germany present the sorest point in our task of convincing the Russians that we have no aggressive intentions toward them. The whole situation is far from promising: indeed it may be on the verge of collapse. With the German military contribution to the Western alliance looking

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more and more problematical, the virtues of neutralization are becoming increasingly evident—at the very least a relaxation of international tension and a face-saving fashion of getting ourselves off the hook. In military terms, our own position vis-à-vis *our* part of Germany offers some sobering comparisons with the obvious embarrassment of the Soviet leaders in theirs.

This brings us to the second corollary to the view that Communist expansion no longer offers a clear and present danger in Europe. For more than five years now—ever since the death of Stalin—such a view has been gaining among well-informed Europeans. And they have been drawing the conclusion from it that their military arrangements with the United States no longer make much sense. Quite obviously, they reason, the really vulnerable and tempting regions for the expansion of Communist influence currently lie outside Europe and are likely to remain extra-European for a long time to come: from 1948 to 1953 the prime target was East Asia; today it is the Near East; already the future areas of ideological exploitation are beginning to open up in Africa and Latin America. Most of the time Europe is simply being by-passed. Except for the issue of Germany—where, as we have seen, there exist real possibilities for a solution satisfactory to both sides—the great decisions in the struggle of the super-powers are being taken elsewhere in the world. The prospect is a novel one for Europeans: it involves a thorough refocusing of their traditional view of their own continent as the center of the universe. Yet once this psychological adjustment is made, the vista it opens up is intoxicating in the extreme—that is, an outside chance for immunity from the major power struggle. And in this perspective, the presence of American troops in Central Europe looks less like a welcome defense than like an egregious provocation to Soviet attack.

It is no wonder, then, that "neutralism" of all varieties has gained so many adherents in the past half-decade. Soon it may be the dominant mentality on the European continent, and even, in a modified, Commonwealth-oriented form, in Britain also. Conventionally, such a prospect fills American policy-makers with dread: it conjures up the specter of a nation without friends. But this is to take a superficial and narrowly military view of the matter. In a neutralized Europe —as with the more immediate prospect of an uncommitted Germany—the decision to remain detached from the cold warfare of the super-powers would be no more than formal. It would constitute an undertaking on the part of the Europeans to do nothing that might deepen the present international cleavage, and perhaps from time to time a more positive effort to reduce Soviet-American hostility. But it would not imply any commitment to refrain from expressions of sympathy or solidarity with one side or the other. Obviously this latter would be impossible: it was the great illusion of President Wilson that he could enjoin such a course on his countrymen in the opening years of the First World War. In the cultural and ideological sense, the vast majority of Europeans naturally feel closer links with the United States than with the Soviet Union. Indeed in many cases it has been only the unpopularity of the military tie with our country that has held back this pro-American feeling from heartfelt expression.

If all the foregoing is true, then one further element needs to be added. For the past five years—again, since the death of Stalin and the settlement of the Korean and Indochinese wars—the Communist camp has made its spectacular (and extra-European) gains not through military action but through economic and cultural penetration. And such appears to be the prospect for the future, despite the alarms aroused over Quemoy and Berlin. When the chances for peaceful penetration are so enticing, it is fantastic to suppose that the leaders of China and the Soviet Union would imperil them by a reckless resort to armed attack. A continuation of the trend of the last half-decade seems the most likely—that is, an interna-

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tional ideological competition in which trade missions, technical experts, and artists on tour offer more persuasive weapons than shipments of tanks and planes. And in competition of this sort, a generalized sympathy on the part of peoples and governments is far more to be desired than a military alliance resting on sullen acceptance.

So much for Europe. Yet if a drastic reduction in the military emphasis of American policy makes sense here, how much more is this the case in the underdeveloped areas of Asia and Africa. If NATO is rickety, surely SEATO and the Baghdad Pact are just about worthless. When we ask ourselves why our country has failed so notably in these latter parts of the world, the simple answer is that we have done the wrong things *most* of the time and explained these things in the wrong terms nearly *all* the time.

I have said earlier that in Asia and Africa single-party, more or less socialist states are rapidly becoming the norm. Toward societies of this kind the Soviet Union finds itself in a much more favorable position than do we in the competitive proffering of aid and advice. The Russians can exploit the undeniable attraction of their own planned economy, and with it their ability to channel foreign aid in directions of their own choosing—that is, in most cases, where the propaganda effect will be greatest. For our part, we are stuck with the rhetoric of "free enterprise"—a slogan to which we cling far more dogmatically in the foreign field than in our current practice at home. It is in this respect in particular that we have shown the most devastating lack of imagination in our dealings with Asian and African nations: to Americans "free enterprise" has a ring of generosity and sturdy individualism—to newly liberated colonials it strikes a hollow note of exploitation, economic waste, and solidarity with native profiteers.

In the same fashion a Soviet engineer or agronomist who is used to rough living and is not reluctant to get his hands dirty in the back country makes a better impression than his American opposite number who is dependent on his luxuries and spends most of his time in urban centers. And in this connection there has arisen one of the most baffling of the paradoxes in which our economic relations abroad have become entangled. We think of ourselves as an idealistic people, and of the Russians as godless materialists. But at the same time the image of ourselves we project overseas is of a goods-oriented society wallowing in luxury. In contrast, the Russians present the picture of a certain Spartan virtue, and of a society whose economic level is sufficiently above that of its impoverished neighbors to serve as a guide-line, but not (like our own) so far removed as to seem alien and impossible of attainment. To a people like the Indians, committed by philosophical tradition to the "non-material," Soviet society, for all its despotism and cruelty, has attractions that American society cannot match. And not the least of these is the visible demonstration it offers of how an agrarian economy can industrialize itself by its unaided efforts in a matter of two generations.

Does this mean that there is nothing we can do, that the Soviet Union has all the advantages in competing for the friendship of the newly liberated, the uncommitted, and the underdeveloped nations of the earth? Certainly it means just that if our present policy—or better, lack of policy—is to continue unchanged. But if we begin to put forward our true ideological assets, rather than persisting in hiding them from foreign view, there is a good chance that we can reverse the present trend before it is too late.

On this subject Mr. Mills is forthright and uncompromising—and I agree totally with him. American capitalism, he declares, is not "an exportable system." Until we put this new conviction in the very center of our foreign dealings, our policy will continue to be what it is today—timid, halting, and unattractive. Once we make this basic shift, however, all sorts of now unexpected possibilities will open up. For then we can begin to project abroad the more appealing features of our own society, the things that we are

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well aware of at home but fail to talk about overseas. We can begin to demonstrate the vast changes in our practices and attitudes that have come about in the past generation—the discrediting of the philosophy of relentless acquisition, the acceptance of the welfare state, the cult of gentleness and tolerance in personal and intergroup relations. We can begin to suggest that as a hard-working, *non-competitive* society we have newly acquired virtues of our own whose very existence most foreigners scarcely suspect. In brief, we can offer the image of a nation steering its patient, expert, pragmatic way between the completely planned and the ruthlessly competitive, and ready to judge the practices of its potential friends with similar open-mindedness.

Thus if what the newly liberated nations usually want is the underwriting of their *state* development plans with money and technical help, then there is no earthly reason aside from doctrinaire devotion to "free enterprise" why we should not do just that. Indeed the whole thing is almost ridiculously simple. We should not expect, however, that our reward for such generosity will be a military alliance or a pledge of undying friendship. That is not at all what the leaders of the formerly colonial peoples and of those about to attain independence have in mind. For them freedom from commitment in the struggle of the super-powers ranks as a first necessity. They refuse to choose sides—indeed, they are not interested in all-or-nothing choices of any sort. They are groping in a highly tentative fashion to define what comes next after the attainment of national independence. And in this search they are thoroughly eclectic about adopting apparently incompatible practices from *both* of the major ideological contestants.

At the same time their policy follows a quite coherent logic of its own. And it is in our failure to realize it that we have made our fundamental error in dealing with the underdeveloped areas of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. We have insisted on regarding their problems merely as a function of our own struggle with Communism and the Soviet Union—witness the official explanation of Vice-President Nixon's hostile reception in South America last year as due solely to Communist machinations. A moment's reflection will suggest how wrong this sort of reasoning has been. The problems of the former European colonies—of "backward" peoples newly raised to nationhood—have only a peripheral connection with Communism and Soviet expansion. They would have existed in any case, even if no Bolshevik Revolution had occurred and no Communist International been launched. The process of liberation might have been less precipitate, but sooner or later it would have come about just the same. And after liberation the problems of economic development, of markets for staple crops, of literacy and hygiene, would have appeared exactly as they are manifest today—and far overshadowing the doctrinal question of ideological choice. The convergence of Communism with colonial liberation has given the latter process its explosive force—but it has not changed its long-range fundamentals.

And so we reach the end point of the present analysis: in respect to what most of the world's people care most about, the ideological and great power struggle between the Soviet Union and the United States is *supremely irrelevant.*

THIS conclusion is not quite the same as Mr. Mills's, but it is certainly implicit in his argument. For the implication of his whole line of thought is that in our almost exclusively military emphasis overseas we have neglected what is really important and gotten ourselves into all sorts of impossible dilemmas where no conceivable advantage is to be obtained. We have fallen into the opposite extreme from the isolationist mentality that was once our undoing. Where formerly we did too little in the foreign sphere, we are now doing too much. A secretary of state like Dulles has become a kind of general busybody, always ready to set forth on his Sisyphean labors of propping up and plastering over. It never seems to occur to him that some of the ills toward

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which he rushes off to apply his questionable nostrums are by their very nature incurable. The idea has apparently never dawned on him that certain situations simply have to be let alone—that there are some places where no visible American interest is at stake, and where the only sensible policy is to "sit this one out." More and more, it seems to me, an attitude of benevolent detachment, always alert to help where help is needed *and asked for*, but never importunate or intruding, should be the guiding principle of American policy toward the fast-growing segment of mankind that chooses to remain neutral in the power struggle.

And so, what about unilateral disarmament? We have come back almost to the original sticking-point, to Mr. Mills's contention that a drastic reduction of our current emphasis on armed might implies a progressive dismantling of our military establishment. Almost back—but not quite. For in this final case, I think, Mr. Mills tries to persuade us of something that is beyond the limits of possibility. It is unthinkable that any American statesman today could assume so awful a responsibility. For everything Mr. Mills proposes short of this final step there is both possibility and crying need—for a liquidation of untenable alliances, more particularly in Asia; for a withdrawal from some of the advanced bases that give the Soviet Union a legitimate grievance; for a halt in the testing of nuclear weapons and in the competitive scramble for propaganda advantage in outer space; for ceaseless effort, undaunted by rebuffs, to reach an agreement for general disarmament. Willful self-exposure, however, is another matter, and here Mr. Mills has overstepped the necessities even of his own argument.

I trust that this final reservation has in no way obscured the force of the argument as a whole. Its logical and moral power is quite overwhelming. Mr. Mills is unassailable in his contention that what passes for political realism today is simply "crackpot"—"a high-flying moral rhetoric . . . joined with an opportunist crawling among a great scatter of unfocused fears and demands." And he is equally impressive when he calls for a revival of radical, utopian thinking from the paralysis which has settled over it during the past decade. "We are at a curious juncture in the history of human insanity; in the name of realism, men are quite mad, and precisely what they call utopian is now the condition of human survival."

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SOVIET JEWS UNDER KHRUSHCHEV

Still the Total State

A. WISEMAN and O. PICK

EVEN Nikita Khrushchev does not claim that, forty-one years after the Bolshevik revolution, the Soviet Union has "solved the Jewish problem." In an interview with a French journalist, Serge Groussard, published in *Figaro* last April, he deplored Jewish reluctance to accept the "remarkable gift" of Birobidzhan, and complained that Soviet Jews preferred intellectual pursuits to such "mass occupations" as the building trades and metal industry. Although Moscow Radio denounced Groussard's account of the interview as a "provocative forgery," there seems little doubt that the statements attributed to Khrushchev reflect the climate of hostility and discrimination in which three million Soviet Jews are compelled to live. Certainly the terror which Soviet Jews endured in Stalin's last years stood in sharp contrast to the egalitarian hopes of 1917, promising the emancipation of the Jews. And it is still difficult to form a precise picture of the extent to which the situation of the ordinary Jew has changed in the six years since Stalin's death.

There are still, of course, the famous identity cards required of all Soviet citizens, which indicate the bearer's nationality and label a Jew as such; in the prevailing atmosphere, Soviet Jews feel this to be a handicap. At the same time, there is not a single Jew in the Soviet Council of Ministers or the Presidium of the Communist party today, and there are far fewer Jews in the Supreme Soviet and the Party Central Committee than there were a generation ago. The presence or absence in the very top ranks of the regime of Communists of Jewish origin, of course, is not conclusive evidence of officially sponsored anti-Semitic policies. After all, Lazar Kaganovich was a member of the Politburo (and another Jew, L. V. Mekhlis, headed the security police) at the height of Stalin's anti-Jewish campaign, the very worst time Jews have experienced under Soviet rule. When Kaganovich was stripped of his powers and titles in 1957, it was not because he was of Jewish origin but because he had joined Georgi Malenkov, Vyacheslav Molotov, Nikolai Bulganin and Dmitri Shepilov (all non-Jews) in opposing Khrushchev. Nevertheless, it is true—and significant—that few Jews are to be found today among the leading officials of the Communist party, among the senior officers of the Soviet army,* or in the diplomatic corps.

Many individual Jews, prominent in the arts and sciences, who have come to terms with the Soviet regime, continue to prosper as members of the elite. Musicians like David Oistrakh, political propagandists like Ilya Ehrenburg and David Zaslavsky, the chess master Mikhail Botvinnik, are cases in point. Last April, three Jewish physicists, Samuil Markovitch Ossoviets, Staly Yosifovich Braginsky, and Natan Aronovich Yavlinsky, received a Lenin Prize for their research in producing plasma at high temperatures. There are many less celebrated Jewish scientists, doctors, scholars, and teachers in major cities like Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev. Nevertheless, almost all the recent visitors to the USSR report, on the basis of

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Two experts on Russia review the latest turns in Soviet policy toward the Jews. A. WISEMAN and O. PICK, who work for the BBC, have contributed to *The World Today*, *British Survey*, and *Problems of Communism*. They appear for the first time in COMMENTARY.

*However, at least one Jewish general purged during the 1930's, former chief of staff Ian B. Gamarnik, was posthumously "rehabilitated" after the 20th Party Congress in 1956.

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conversations with Soviet Jews, that young Jewish students are finding it more and more difficult to gain admission to higher educational institutions. Whether official, semi-official or unofficial, a kind of *numerus clausus* faces the younger generation of Soviet Jews. At the same time, the Jewish religious and cultural institutions that were mercilessly harassed between 1948 and 1953 have not been restored. And official pressure against the Jewish community as such has been abated only slightly in the last three years as part of Khrushchev's efforts to mollify international public opinion. Russia remains a difficult land for the Jews, even if the period of midnight arrests and wholesale murders passed with Stalin's death.

THE Bolshevik revolution cannot be blamed for the virulent anti-Semitism prevalent among the backward agrarian peoples of Russia and East Europe. Nevertheless, despite frequent claims that the Soviet regime had "abolished anti-Semitism," the sporadic Communist efforts to combat it during the 1920's and 30's clearly failed. Certainly Stalin's cynical alliance with Nazi Germany did little to discourage the traditional anti-Semitism endemic among large sections of the population. During World War II, when Soviet Jews faced the threat of massacre by the invading Nazis, the best they could expect from most of their non-Jewish neighbors was that they should not lend a hand in the slaughter. (There are many accounts of the manner in which citizens of the Ukraine and Byelorussia cooperated in the Nazi deportation and extermination of the Jews.) The postwar resurgence of popular anti-Semitism, indeed, owes a great deal to the Nazi propaganda in the regions of the USSR occupied by the German army during the war. The favorable reception then accorded to the racist ideas of Nazism showed how little the Soviet regime had done to combat anti-Semitism between 1917 and 1939.

Stalin's purge of Jewish cultural leaders and the campaign against "rootless cosmopolitans" which accompanied it during the last five years of the dictator's life* further encouraged anti-Semitism in the population at large. And when Khrushchev denounced Stalin's crimes at the 20th Party Congress, it is significant that he passed over in silence the destruction of Jewish writers and cultural leaders. It was left to the Warsaw *Folkshtimme* to raise questions about the extermination of Yiddish culture in the USSR. Khrushchev's failure to mention these outrages would indicate that, in his own mind, these matters were politically not very important—or, at least, not as important as the affair of the Jewish "doctors' plot" which he did discuss.

After the 20th Congress, judicial murder ceased to be an instrument of policy in the USSR, and Jews benefited in the same measure as other Soviet citizens. But several of Khrushchev's internal changes nevertheless tended to increase discrimination against Jews. For example, the decentralization of Soviet industry gave greater power to local authorities, and in the non-Slav republics this made it difficult for Jews to keep their jobs or get new ones. Such areas had been colonized by Russians—both Gentiles and Jews—and local feeling was strong against these representatives of an alien centralism. In this respect, recent visitors to the USSR have reported, the Jews are twice cursed: paradoxically as "Russians," traditionally as "Zhydi." (Khrushchev blandly told French Socialist visitors in 1957: "Naturally, if the Jews now tried to occupy leading positions in the republics, the local inhabitants would object.")

At the same time, most professions in the USSR are gradually becoming overcrowded and, as often happens, there is a tendency for discriminatory pressures against Jews to build up. There is no evidence that Soviet authorities are discouraging this tendency; indeed, they seem to be prepared to use it as a means to divert discontent generated by some of Khrushchev's policies. Thus there was a spate of articles in the Moscow and also the provincial Soviet press that stressed

*See "Soviet Policy and Jewish Fate," by W. Z. Laqueur, COMMENTARY, October 1956.

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the anti-social acts of individuals bearing unmistakably Jewish names. Such articles are among the established methods of drawing attention to pilfering, embezzlement, black-marketeering and so on, and offenders with non-Jewish names have also been getting their share of publicity. But the Jews are getting more than their share; if one were to take the Soviet press literally, nearly half the petty criminals in the USSR have names like Rubinstein, Feinberg, Flaxman, and Blonstein. These newspaper stories began appearing in June 1957, and thus belong to the period of Khrushchev's personal rule—that is, after the defeat of the "anti-party bloc."

It can be argued that the new popular anti-Semitic tendencies have the approval of the Soviet regime but are, nevertheless, not the result of a declared official design. In two spheres, however, Khrushchev must bear personal responsibility for policies directed against the Jewish community. Despite promises to the contrary by Soviet officials to French and other delegations, Yiddish cultural life has not been allowed to resume. And, above all, the road to Israel remains barred to Russian Jews wishing to emigrate.

The aspiration of the Russian Jews to be recognized as a distinct cultural entity is being denied on the grounds that the Jewish group does not fulfill the requirements laid down by Stalin for constituting a nationality. The late dictator wrote in his famous essay *Marxism and the National Question:* "A nation is a historically constituted stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture. . . . It is sufficient for a single one of these characteristics to be lacking and a nation ceases to be a nation."*

The Jews, scattered over the length and breadth of the USSR, obviously cannot fulfill these requirements, and the Soviet attempt to set up a separate Jewish Autonomous Region of Birobidzhan has been a failure. To be sure, even in Stalin's day Yiddish culture was permitted to carry on from time to time, despite the dogma, when this suited Soviet policy. During World War II, the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee formed in Moscow was encouraged in its task of rallying world Jewish opinion against Nazism and toward a more charitable view of Soviet Russia as an ally of the democracies. Once the war ended, however, the Committee was disbanded. By 1948, all the iron rules of the Stalin doctrine of nationality were applied. From that time on, only Jews in Birobidzhan could read Yiddish books or newspapers, though only 2 per cent of Soviet Jews live there while 200,000, for example, live in Moscow. Khrushchev said only last year that, as far as he is concerned, all the Jews could go to Birobidzhan and set up a Jewish state, but he was not prepared to allow Yiddish schools to be established all over Russia.†

THE Communists argue that Soviet Jews themselves are not interested in Yiddish books or a Yiddish theater, and that it is better to perpetuate Yiddish culture by translations into Russian. (Several books by Sholem Aleichem, for example, have recently been translated, and a collected works is promised for this year.) Last June, the Soviet writer Boris Polevoy told the Buenos Aires Yiddish newspaper *Tribune* that Jewish authors writing in Yiddish seek to be translated into Russian because they are ashamed of publishing Yiddish-language editions of less than 5,000 copies. He cited no evidence for his claim that a Yiddish book could find no more than 5,000 buyers in the Soviet Union.‡ Indeed, a contrary impression is

*The same year Stalin published this essay (1913), Lenin wrote: "Jewish national culture is the slogan of rabbis and the bourgeoisie—the slogan of our enemies."

†See the interview with Khrushchev published in *Der Tog*, New York, June 13, 1958.

‡The same Boris Polevoy told Howard Fast well after the war that he had just seen the Yiddish writer Kvitko, and that Kvitko was in good health and working, when in fact the latter had been arrested in 1949 and killed in 1952. See Fast's *The Naked God* (Praeger, 1957).

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created by the fact that the Warsaw *Folkshtimme* has been banned in the USSR and that Warsaw Radio has stopped its Yiddish broadcasts, which formerly had a large audience in the western parts of the USSR. Furthermore, a number of Yiddish musical soirees recently held in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Odessa, Minsk, and other cities proved extremely popular. Danilov, Soviet Deputy Minister of Culture, said that three million people attended Yiddish concerts in 1957. The Ministry has also released various phonograph recordings of Yiddish folk songs. It is hard to tell what prompted Soviet authorities to permit this musical activity; in any event, there has been no sign that it is a forerunner of greater freedom.

Parallel with the prohibitions on Yiddish culture are the restrictions on Judaism as a religion. Local Jewish religious communities have not been allowed to set up a nationwide organization. There are not enough synagogues, not enough prayer books, and not enough rabbis. In an English-language broadcast last October 18, Moscow Radio claimed that 4,000 Hebrew prayer books had been printed in time for the High Holidays, and that a further printing was "in hand." It also claimed that there were a hundred Jewish houses of prayer in Moscow, but this is flatly denied by all recent visitors to the USSR. Conceivably, the broadcast was referring to temporary accommodations arranged for the holiday period. In any case, in Tashkent in Central Asia, one small synagogue serves more than 50,000 Jews, and in the autumn of 1958 services there were conducted by a lay preacher. The Moscow rabbinical school is small and cannot cope with the demand for trained rabbis.

Despite the difficulties which Jewish religious observance encounters, synagogues throughout the Soviet Union overflowed with worshippers of all ages on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur in 1958. Last Rosh Hashanah too, the Chief Rabbi of Moscow exchanged messages with Israeli, British, and other rabbis. This may be a sign that the Soviet authorities are ready to permit a few breaches in the isolation of Soviet Jewry. More likely, however, it is another propaganda attempt to offset the worldwide censure of the Soviet treatment of Russian Jews.

Beyond doubt, Khrushchev is aware of the repercussions in the West caused by the revelation of Stalin's anti-Jewish purges. With the exception of the suppression of the Hungarian uprising, no other aspect of Soviet policy since 1953 has done so much to dismay the Communist movement in Europe and the Americas. Khrushchev's indiscretions on the subject of the Jews did not make the task of official apologists any easier. Now these propagandists seem to have decided that Birobidzhan is the only card left to play, and are playing it vigorously. The Soviet press and radio are engaged in a concerted campaign to popularize the East Siberian territory as an alternative to Israel. It is being depicted as a fertile land with a rapidly developing industry, a land with two official languages—Yiddish and Russian—in which Jewish collective farmers are living idyllic lives. Much is being made, too, of the wartime exploits of Jewish veterans of the Soviet army now living in Birobidzhan. And the presence of some 2,000 books in the "Jewish department" of Birobidzhan's Sholem Aleichem Library was recently cited by Moscow Radio as evidence of the flourishing state of Yiddish culture.*

Now the sober fact is that Birobidzhan is probably no better or worse than some other parts of the USSR, but Soviet Jews just do not want to go there. Khrushchev himself concedes that many who did go to Birobidzhan did not stay. "They get there burning with enthusiasm," he told Groussard, "and then, one by one, they leave." Khrushchev told *Der Tog's* interviewer last June that "all that is left there are signs in Yiddish at the railway stations, but there are no Jews left there." Since the Jewish Auton-

*Concerned by reports that the Soviet authorities planned a new campaign to resettle large numbers of Jews in Birobidzhan, leaders of the American Jewish Committee raised the question with Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan during his U.S. tour last month. He characterized the reports as "without foundation."—Ed.

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omous Region is neither Jewish nor autonomous, Soviet Jews regard it as nothing better than a potential mass ghetto.

In view of the enthusiasm for Israel known to exist among Soviet Jews, the regime's puerile attempts to discredit the new state must fall on deaf ears. The attempts continue, nevertheless. Recently, the Soviet press published letters alleged to be from Soviet Jews now living in Israel, warning their relatives and friends at home not to follow their example. G. Plotkin, a member of a small Soviet delegation which visited Israel in July 1958, painted a picture of life there (in articles published in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* and *Vechernaya Moskva*) which Israelis could only find ridiculous. Plotkin claimed to have seen crowds besieging the Soviet Embassy and Polish diplomatic mission in Tel Aviv begging for permission to return to their former homelands; he also alleged that no man over forty can find a job in Israel, that new arrivals rarely find work even one day a week, and that former Soviet citizens are offered only manual labor. In an article in *Sovetskaya Kultura* (March 25, 1958) entitled "Hell in the Israeli Paradise," a writer named Yulsky describes how wives of new immigrants were forced into prostitution to earn bread for their families. Yulsky declares that the distance between Israeli "chauvinists" and the Nazis was "no greater than a sparrow's beak."

Despite such propaganda, Soviet Jews have been making desperate attempts to get to Israel, and a few have managed to do so by first going to Poland, which in 1956 adopted a more liberal policy toward Jewish emigration. Under the Polish-Soviet Repatriation Agreement signed in that year, not only former Polish Jews but also many Soviet Jews went to Poland, and from there to Israel. By early 1958, about 10,000 Jews in all had returned to Poland from the USSR. The rush of Soviet Jews to Poland and Israel, according to reports from Warsaw, alarmed the Soviet authorities, and measures were taken in 1957 to slow down this East European equivalent of the "underground railroad." By July 1958, no more than 300 Jews a month were leaving the USSR for Poland. And, whereas 35,000 Jews left Poland for Israel between July 1956 and March 1957, the Polish authorities stopped Jewish emigration from March to October of that year, and then resumed it only in drastically reduced form.

This "underground railroad" to Poland seems to have been an inadvertent consequence of Soviet policy. In Russia itself, Khrushchev has remained adamant in forbidding Jewish migration to Israel—or elsewhere, for that matter. If he really believes, as he says, that the bulk of Jews are happier in the USSR than they would be abroad, he should put his faith to the test; but it is extremely doubtful that he will do so. Communist doctrine as well as the realities of Soviet policy militate against such a course.

Quite apart from the general Communist suspicion of religious groups and ethnic minorities, Soviet Jews are being used as pawns in the international struggle. For almost a decade now the USSR has been pursuing a pro-Arab and anti-Israel policy in the Middle East, and the Communists cite their harsh treatment of Soviet Jews to impress visiting Arabs. As long as this kind of policy continues to pay dividends, both in the Middle East and to a limited extent at home, there is no reason to expect the Soviet leaders to alter their line. Khrushchev is no doubt assaying the relative weight of Western disgust and Arab approval; as long as the latter seems more desirable, little will change.

Letting the Jews out of Russia would represent an even more serious departure from Communist doctrine. It would entail an admission before the entire world that large numbers of Soviet citizens are eager to leave the "homeland of socialism." It might encourage other oppressed nationalities within the USSR to press with greater vigor for similar rights. The attraction of Turkey for the Turkic tribes of Soviet Central Asia springs immediately to mind. As no Soviet citizen is allowed to emigrate, with the exception of isolated cases on compassionate grounds, it is inevitable in the Communist

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scheme of things that the Jews should suffer the same restrictions. The new attempt to play up Birobidzhan, as well as the continuing attacks on Israel in the Soviet press, aim at discouraging the obvious Jewish desire to emigrate. The first Soviet book on Israel, *The State of Israel: Its Position and Policy*, by K. Ivanov and Z. Sheynis, published in 1958, tries to convince Soviet Jews that Israel is an artificially created nation existing under the worst conditions of capitalism. The book will also tend to make a Russian reader identify every Jew with the "narrow bourgeois nationalism" of Israeli leaders, described as imperialist tools and threats to peace.

The immediate prospects for Soviet Jewry are bleak, though not hopeless. It is unthinkable that Khrushchev or any other Soviet leader would emulate Nazi genocide or the Spanish Inquisition. On the other hand, the Soviet authorities may intensify the official pressures for assimilation. They certainly will not permit emigration to Israel unless they also abandon the Arab cause and a large part of their own ideological framework. This is not likely to happen in a world divided by cold war, and no amount of moral pressure by world Jewry can make the Russians change their mind. At the moment, Soviet Jews are being subjected to many pressures on various sides, all directed toward assimilation. But anti-Semitism has usually increased Jewish solidarity, and the contemporary Soviet Union appears to be no exception in this respect. Isolated though Soviet Jews may be, they are not abandoned. They are sustained in their trials by the spiritual reserves of their heritage, the existence of Israel, the support of world Jewry, and—not least—the sympathy of all free men.

NAMES OF MICHALISHEK

MENKE KATZ

MINE are the names outmoded as the kindness of my mother,
humble as the cool shadows in the evening woods,
where echoes do not pine away for the love of Narcissus,
but in yearning for a yell of the vanished children of Michalishek.
The restless brook roving through my tiny home town
will repeat forever and a day the names of Michalishek.
Listen:

Yeiske—Meishke—Blumke—Menke—Berke—Elchik.
Yeiske, real as this rhymeless prayer to love:
a thrilling chill from the snows of my childhood,
entrancing as Joseph through the dreams of Pharaoh,
not in dungeons of Egypt but on mudlands of Lithuania
cherished by a wish of a homeless, hunted Jew.
Yeiske, genuine as the light of my eyes.

Meishke, a name moving as an oar of a homemade rowboat,
rowed idly by a lone, love-wounded lad,
longing for his barefooted maiden over the Viliya River,
which hugged the townlet of my bearded forefathers:
rich in mighty dreams, proud with hoary wisdom.
The crude oar in lover's hands, miraculous as Moses' wonder rod.

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Blumke, brisk as stray seeds flung into your face by a slapping wind.
Her hair braided with tough flowers growing out of the stones of a ruin.
Her fingers sore from plucking sorrel out of thornbushes.
Winter, she mellows by the light of cherubs on wings of icicles.
The sudden gust through frost-weeds rustled her in silks.
Blumke, sister of dandelions—O, tear-kissed sister of mine!

Menke, laughworthy, not worth the eyehole of a needle—
but my eyebrows are opulent, bushy as thoughts of life after death.
My father's eyebrows—the pride of the baretoed nights of Michalishek.
My walk is light and free as my mother's laughter.
I am dangerous as at twilight, a falling day,
daring as a newborn word, startling as a freshly molded verse.
I am chatty as Yiddish, my mother tongue.
I dallied with dreams as in a game of jackstones,
when stars paved the crooked, unpaved alley where I was born.

Midnight.
The candlelit house struggles with the night, blind as a mole.
Berke—a boy left all alone in the depths of a *cheder* tale,
where a dark forest glares only with the eyes of a threatening bear.
The bear is shaken by the awe of the pleading boy:
"O, bear, bear, bearele, be timid and kind,
mamma will surely bring you tomorrow
a tasty cooky flavored with poppy-seeds."

Elchik is the neighboring brother from the near-by cemetery:
a lad wrought on a windowpane of our age-weary house,
caressed by pitiless winter, pampered by bleak, freezing design.
Elchik—a name scorched under the ashes of my burnt hometown.
Michalishek in flames toward a deaf, godless sky,
carried him to heaven, like Elijah, on horses of fire.

The moon is a snow-apple of a delusive orchard,
to tease hungry little brothers and a fright-skinned sister.
Carved in traceries of frost-work appears Elijah of Gilead,
seeking death, in vain, under a broom-bush,
with God not in wind or fire, but in tender whisper.
The smell of caves of the wilderness on his clothes.
The kindness of a far, lucky morrow in his eyes.
Real and near as the next-door neighbor,
he opens for the children a bagful of bread,
brought to him by ravens at the stream Kerith.
Elchik is the light of his long shining beard.
He scatters on the windowpane the three hundred bits of silver
which Joseph gave to Benjamin in the land of Egypt.
The cheery sister picks frost-beads for a fairy garland.
The wealthy little brothers gather the fancied coins.

MENKE KATZ has published a number of volumes of verse in Yiddish. His "At a Patched Window" appeared in our February 1956 number.

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FAMILY TIES

A Story

ALEX MILLER

HIS father sitting at the glass-topped desk looked him square in the eyes. His father's deep-cut face lines were not hard now but compassionate. "You don't have to keep it a secret from me—I know your business is going bad."

"It's true. I've done my best to keep it up. But the money's gone."

"And suppose you put in a few thousand more . . . would it do any good?" the older man asked.

Why is he afraid of saying "I"? Art asked himself. He didn't want money from him. The wound was his own, not his father's.

"No, it's hopeless," Art admitted apathetically. Something was missing in his own attitude. Something proud, willful, and fiercely defensive. Now he was inclined to be soft, defeated, and comfort-seeking. He wouldn't have made an admission before. But that was because his father always sought this from him, evoked a guilt. He had said that Art had no mind for business —he was too dreamy, too impractical. And always on a moral, unforgiving note that robbed him of something within. His father played the melody with a thousand variations, even when Art's business had been growing and making money.

"Well, I can't blame you," Mr. Kaplow said. "I told you some time ago, there's no money in cheap wash dresses." It was comforting that his father didn't blame him now for what had happened. For once he didn't feel guilty. "So what are you going to do?"

"Close the business and pay my bills," Art said. Mr. Kaplow reflected by working his mouth.

"Do you have any money outstanding?"

"Some. . . ."

"Will anything be left over for you?"

"Hardly. . . ."

"Don't think it hasn't bothered me, Art. Whatever you may think, I'm still a father." Art looked downward in silence as he waited for the other to spell out his thoughts. The accusation was there but it had no sting. He hoped his father would avoid for once the old differences, seeking an impossible triumph.

"I have a proposition for you . . . come into my business. And I'll take the inventory off your hands, pay you what it costs. What do you think?"

Art was startled, almost unbelieving. "It's a great help," he said. The stern challenge went out of his father's face and he smiled with pleasure. Art found human vulnerability there.

"You have a family to support. I know what a worry that can be."

"It's a weight off my mind." Mr. Kaplow hung expectantly on his son's words. His well-boned face hinted at disappointment. But his father's feelings escaped Art, struggling against his own natural reserve.

"Let's set a time of three weeks to work it out," his father said. "Sell all you can—talk to your landlord about releasing you from the loft. Let's have everything settled by then because I want to leave for Miami a few weeks after that."

"I'll settle everything."

"And that isn't all. . . ." He met Art's eyes, possessively. Art felt exposed to his father's sense of drama, and readied for a blow to his pride. Mr. Kaplow continued: "When

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you come into the business, I want you as a partner, not a salaried man. You will get a share of the business."

Art smiled thankfully. Yet the next moment he wondered what had come over his father. Why so suddenly charitable after so many years? It was bewildering, even frustrating to face this change. Now he would feel the weight of obligation after the bitter feelings, the long unreasoning injustice. He felt reluctance. He would lose his freedom to be bitter, would have to adjust his sense of what was real, his normal expectations. The feeling persisted that his father was getting off too easily. Why should his father assume that all this generosity was in character? He should have explained the change, some small admission. . . .

"There's one more matter I haven't mentioned yet," Mr. Kaplow said, dropping his voice. "There's more involved than myself. I've talked about this to Oscar and Jack Posner and, frankly, they aren't enthusiastic. You can understand how they feel."

"You're the boss, aren't you?" Art asked, laughing and almost crowing. Oscar, his father's younger brother, had too good a thing in the business to want to share, and it was obvious that Posner, the general manager, would resent any change of authority.

"So they will have to accept it," his father said, finding pleasure in his power.

When he told his wife Ellen about the offer she narrowed her eyes omnisciently, saying, "I knew it, I knew he would come through with something good!" The whole world had a different look, now they could settle down to enjoy life, buy the things they needed. The girls could take piano and ballet lessons again. Money would no longer be the main topic of conversation. Her enthusiasm was infectious.

They had his father and his second wife Elsa, a neat attractive little woman, over for dinner and Ellen went all out to please them. The favorite family dishes were prepared and each serving seemed to provoke an endless round of pleasures and reminiscences. It was a ripe, homey atmosphere that kindled old attachments and awoke nostalgic delights. His father had no end of praise for Ellen and her abilities as a homemaker. Elsa smiling at Ellen shared her husband's feelings at the happy reunion and it seemed as much on her account as his. But his granddaughters of six and ten brought a transcendent warmth to his face. Dressed in matching plaid skirts and embroidered blouses, they pushed and wrestled each other for his attention. They draped over him, closed sticky fingers over his eyes, played the piano, danced, and recited to exhaustion. Art and Ellen exchanged wide-eyed recognitions. When the older couple had left that evening, they were agreed that bygones should be left bygones. Ellen was sure of his father's change of heart; Art was more reserved. Ellen argued that this would keep him at a distance from his father and spoil the fine start made. After all, she told him, his father had to be convinced too of Art's good will. Art heard her out, nodding attentively.

"Do you or do you not agree?" she demanded with brusque humor.

"Yes and no. . . ."

The day Art came into the firm of Dearie Designs, Inc., his father called Oscar and Posner into the inner office. Oscar shook Art's hand in big style, grabbing his elbow with his free hand. Art was introduced to Posner, a short man, built broad and hearty with a military stance and a self-confident expression to match.

"We've discussed this before," Mr. Kaplow said, settled in his chair. "Today Art is coming into the business. Work with him as an equal." Both nodded as though pulled by a string. Mr. Kaplow continued, "The idea is teamwork, cooperation," repeating and savoring the phrase, "teamwork, cooperation. Nobody specializes here. If there's a job to do, we do it no matter who."

"We're not too proud to sweep the floor, Art," Oscar added.

"Well, we have other people for that," Mr. Kaplow said with a trace of irony. "You won't have to. But get together when any important matter comes up. Come into my

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private office—close the door and discuss."

"It sounds good," Art said. "But shouldn't I have some particular work, besides?"

"We can wait for that. You should get to know our operations. I'm sure that Posner and Oscar will give you all the help you'll need."

It sounded reasonable enough to Art.

Art stepped into the factory through the entrance door and walked along the work tables at which the girls sat sorting out half-finished garments. Some of the older women whom he had known before recognized him and he waved to them. The din and chatter of sewing machines was deafening but he got a comforting sense of purpose and activity like the answer to a deep need. He walked to the cutting table where Patsy, the forelady, marked out patterns. She was a volatile little woman with deft hands.

"I heard the good news," she said bright-eyed.

"Thanks."

"I think the old man means well this time."

"I hope so. . . ."

"It's time you got together. But I should warn you." Her eyes darted alarmingly. "Watch out for Mr. Posner—he's no good!"

"But why?"

"I can't say. He's coming."

She snatched up her crayon and began marking with swift strokes. Art turned round to find Posner smiling at him with unnatural fixity.

"Learning things?" he asked with a facsimile of kindness. Art smiled, conscious of trying to be pleasant. Patsy looked up from a forehead lined with concentration.

"I think he'll do very well," she said belligerently. Posner was sucking a tooth and nodding without conviction. He asked abruptly about a certain order and left.

"We'll talk about it some other time," she said to Art.

He came back to the office, and listened to a fabric salesman showing swatches of material to his father and Posner. The man had a huge, beefy face like some mythical fruit. When Art's father introduced him, mentioning Art's connection with the firm, the man beamed violently as if suddenly galvanized. Every cell in his red face strained with toadyism, his fat eyes leading the parade.

"Isn't that too wonderful for words . . . father and son . . . what a combination!"

Mr. Kaplow's smile broke through his pride. Posner ignored the salesman's enthusiasm. "How much is the material?"

"Sixty-eight cents." The big face examined the three anxiously.

"High count?" Posner asked.

"The best for the money," the salesman said. Posner looked severe.

"It's not bad," Mr. Kaplow broke in easily, "but not this week." The salesman relaxed and sighed.

Posner blinked as if he had been undermined. A bright red spot appeared on his full cheeks like a touch of disease. He stood still, then stepped away suddenly to talk to the secretary at the other end of the office. Mr. Kaplow's heavy eyebrows raised in discernment. The salesman picked up his samples and left. When Oscar returned from the bank, it was decided to go to lunch.

They were seated in a booth at the restaurant. Art's father was telling him about conditions in the trade.

"Buyers are getting harder to deal with. They will chisel your last nickel away if you don't watch out." He turned abruptly to Oscar. "What price did you quote to the April Stores?"

"What price?" Oscar asked, high-pitched and tremulous. "We talked about our whole line."

Mr. Kaplow was exasperated. "Look, Oscar, didn't we make up a special number for the buyer?"

"Seventeen-fifty a dozen," he answered meekly. The corners of his mouth turned down unhappily like a drooping mustache. "I had to meet the New York competition. . . ."

"We didn't have to cut. The buyer saves on freight."

"We need the business," Oscar said at-

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tempting a gay confidence. "We'll make it up on the volume."

"Volume, volume . . . the more we ship the more we lose," Mr. Kaplow said.

Posner looked self-satisfied. "You've got to treat them rough. They like it better. I was talking to Mabel at Allied this morning. . . ."

"I didn't know it," Mr. Kaplow said, startled.

Posner went on unperturbed. "She wanted her order in two extra patterns. I told her nothing doing!"

"We could have given it to her without trouble." Mr. Kaplow shrugged shoulders and face in perplexity.

"Why spoil her? She's eating out of my hand." Posner's smile turned sardonic. When the waitress came along bearing their sandwiches, Oscar's face lighted up. She was made up to the hilt. Oscar followed her aggressively, refusing to give way as she bent over the table. He winked to Art. "Fix you up?" Art guessed his wounds had healed quickly.

Out of the restaurant, Oscar shined up to him. "Everything is going to be all right, don't you worry. We'll make a great team. Sure, we have our differences of opinion. Remember, it's fight for dear old Dearie!" His smile was all-encompassing. Art figured that the old man had laid down the law to both of them. But he felt warmly generous. Oscar too had his problems and if everybody got closer it was all to the good. As for the rah-rah stuff, he could overlook a certain amount. So, it was Oscar's personal style!

The next day his father announced that he was leaving for Miami in a couple of days. It seemed abrupt and premature to Art, who wished he would stay on and help fix his position in the business. Art was assured that everything would be all right. As for the legal papers making him a partner, that could wait till Mr. Kaplow got back. Art put his doubts out of his mind.

Privately in his office Mr. Kaplow told his son of certain misgivings about the others. Posner was bull-headed and not inclined to admit his mistakes; his brother Oscar was too easy-going and careless. Perhaps more than anything else, this implied a confidence in Art that Art himself hadn't suspected.

WHEN his father left, Art took up the job of making himself a vital part of the business. Actually, there was no ready-made place for him. It had to be created. The line had to be learned, the big customers and their requirements, and the backlog of orders, the problems of delivery, and the bottlenecks of production. He familiarized himself with the different operations, worked with Patsy at the cutting tables, helped her lay out the materials and handled the cutting knife. Oscar and Posner made no effort to obstruct him.

When they called him in for a conference, it was often to discuss matters that were new to him. He was content to listen for the most part, only occasionally making a positive suggestion. He was aware that a certain lofty manner of theirs was calculated to exclude him from the discussion, but he wasn't surprised; he didn't expect the information handed him on a platter. As if to make up for their clubbishness, Oscar turned to Art with a certain patronizing air as he explained matters, an elaborate clarifying of the obvious, and not inconsiderable moralizing. It was the last that was most trying. Art saw clearly that Oscar was only imitating his brother.

Trying to make himself valuable to the business, Art hit on a number of labor-saving improvements in the operations, and suggested changes in the shop layout. Oscar was careful to point out that he was glad to see Art was thinking "positively," and that something good would be sure to come out of all these ideas. He became expansive and eloquent. Posner was much more to the point. He dismissed them summarily.

Undismayed, Art shrugged and continued. It occurred to him that a number of separate sewing operations could be combined if the sequence could be changed. He had checked the different methods and found a time-saving of almost 50 per cent. Now he

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had something that couldn't be turned down. But he was mistaken. Posner took it in the same way, but with the characteristic red, angry spots on his cheeks. Art realized that he had stepped into the man's special area which was the sewing machine operations, and cast a doubt on his ability. In fact, almost any improvement coming from Art was bound to touch him in a sensitive spot, because any evidence of talent would rob him of authority.

Art considered a change of pace. Perhaps a trip for business through some territory not covered by the firm's salesmen would help to establish him. When he made his suggestion, he received an entirely new response. Posner was warm and receptive for once, telling him it was just what the firm needed. Oscar agreed, adding his own fulsome rhetoric. Art caught the look of relief between the two, but decided that it was worth taking the chance. It was possible that he might get few or no orders, but he was, after all, a new man in virgin territories and couldn't be expected to write much the first time. There would be little that could be used against him.

All things considered, it was a successful trip with a half-dozen sizable orders in the bag. It was evident that Posner and Oscar were not overjoyed—the general manager with his characteristic reserve, his uncle with even greater exaggerations. But there were breaks of sudden silences in Oscar that spelled hollowness, as if fatigue had suddenly struck in the middle of a sentence. Art felt disappointment from the moment he laid out his orders. As for Posner, he looked at the orders almost blankly, without comment except to repeat the numbers and prices. His opaque brown eyes moved in a stiff face, like captive marbles. Art felt he had returned to the same point he had left, and he couldn't avoid self-disgust for expecting anything better. He felt he deserved what he got for all his innocence, stubbornly refusing himself the indulgence of righteous anger. The forelady was absolutely right. Posner was his enemy and the weak Oscar was on his side.

Art saw that he had come to an impasse. He could accept his useless position, and wait for an opportunity to come up, but that wasn't very likely. Besides, his pride, his whole substance cried out against it. Only his father could settle the question, but he wasn't very likely to see his side from a distance. He could phone him, of course, and ask him to intervene, but he had no desire to be the complainant knowing that it would put him in a bad light. In view of his father's convinced optimism, he could only feel disappointment and Art was sure it would be turned against him. The past lay at hand for Oscar and Posner to work on. There was no other way then but to keep doing what he was and make it clear for the record. He would at least put up a good fight.

Labor costs appeared to be a good place to start. Art knew that for the last few years work rates had gone up, fringe benefits had increased, and operations been made more involved due to changed styles; yet the old figures were being used in determining costs. When he told Oscar about the need for a study of the problem, he found him quite agreeable. It was hard to see how Posner could turn him down. If he did, it would be clear how matters stood. In fact, Oscar told him to go right ahead.

But the next day, after Art had begun to check the records, Oscar had changed his mind: the time was inopportune, the prices were set anyway, the machine operators would be upset by timing them. Something within Art gave way all at once. He didn't care what happened; he was unable to.

"Are these your own reasons?" he asked.

Oscar drew himself up to full dignity. His weakness was swept under the rug.

"It would be better if you had respect. It's your big fault, you know. . . ." Art opened his mouth to answer, then caught himself. It was funny, but there was Oscar puffed up many sizes too big, trying to fill the old man's shoes. He felt he could have deflated and humanized him all at one stroke; then he'd build a bridge to him. But one look at the formidable front told him to

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desist. He played no independent part anyway. Today he leaned on Posner; tomorrow it might be him. He felt an overpowering resentment against his father. He must have known that their opposition couldn't be put aside so easily. Did he think that a simple order was enough?

He thought that it would be wiser to talk it over with Ellen before facing Posner. It was a concession to his uncertainty as well as her own rights in the matter. Art determined to check himself and not let himself be provoked into an outburst. He had nothing to say to Posner for the rest of the day, but there was a trace of a self-confident smile on the latter's face that deepened the doubt within Art. He looked the other way, feeling guilty over his hostility, while the other seemed to take it as food and drink that made his lips shine with malice.

Ellen saw no other way than standing up for his rights, the sooner the better. Anything else was weakness. Before her clear-cut view Art felt inadequate, as if his caution were only an excuse for accepting defeat. He agreed to her line of thought because it seemed to lift a weight from him and lead to action, but it was not without a feeling that responsibility was its other meaning. He knew she wanted him to be a "man" without her saying so.

IT CAME very soon after coming to work. Settling it one way or another was the first point to be taken up. This was what had been resolved at breakfast and what was on his mind as he drove to work. He called Oscar and Posner together to the inner office. Oscar looked positively frightened, Posner intensely wary. He began with a few remarks about his father's wishes to overcome years of disagreement. He hadn't arrived at his decision lightly either.

He said: "My father meant me to come into this business as a partner, not a flunky." Oscar fingered his collar, trying to loosen it around his neck. "I didn't come here just to collect a pay check. I wanted to be of value. I've made any number of suggestions for the factory and office. Now, I'm asking you, Posner, if you consider them all useless, without exception?"

"I don't know which ones you're talking about," the other answered. "But none were very practical."

"You weren't willing to try even one."

"We're too busy to experiment."

"What's your objection to checking production costs?" Art asked.

Posner's mouth closed firmly, bloodlessly. He shook his head, denying it absolutely. "We can't let you do it now."

"And you deny that our costs are not in line?"

"They are not. . . ."

"I'll tell you what's bothering you, Jack," Art said. "The ideas come from me and you can't stand it. What do you care if the business loses money?"

"So why don't you take it up with your father?"

"That's what I'm doing!" Art shouted. "And I'm getting out of here now." He turned to Oscar, who looked as if he were facing the last judgment. "I thought you had more guts than that."

Oscar waved him away. Art trembled with anger and frustration, a hot turbulence too huge to handle. It seemed to join in one piece with the weakness of fear, a blank uncertainty of the future. He put on his hat and coat reluctantly as if sealing a doom. When he left he felt he had left a vital part of himself behind, his courage too. Only a blind, burning sensation remained as if it was all that was left of himself. Oscar and Posner had kept everything for themselves.

Walking up the stairway to his apartment, he heard music from the radio and it struck him like a mocking insult. He felt wholly inadequate and unworthy of any kind of pleasure. Ellen, who was dusting the furniture, was startled as he came in. She switched off the music.

"I was thinking about you . . . almost expected you," she said.

"I told them off. I couldn't help it." Before anything he needed to justify himself.

"Maybe you should have held back till your father returned," she said.

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"But we discussed it before . . . didn't we?"

"You're right. I'm sorry. Why should we regret our actions?"

"I was patient up to my ears."

"It's true, it's true!" she cried out a shade too vigorously. Art told her what had happened. The story now seemed to him cold and unimportant. But the prickling of insecurity was a knock at the door. He saw no exit.

"They planned it that way," Ellen said. Art wasn't so sure.

That night Art wrote a letter to his father and sent it by air mail. It was Monday and he figured on getting an answer by Wednesday or Thursday. It came the following Tuesday and it said simply that he would return within a week and take up the matter then.

WAITING out the week wasn't easy. There were times when Art and Ellen felt that it would turn out all right, and others when they were sure they had acted rashly. They went over the grounds so thoroughly that there was nothing left to say. They reassured each other over and over but failed to dispel each other's doubts. They agreed finally that only his father had the answer and nothing would be certain until they heard it. That was their only assurance.

When they arrived early one afternoon at the apartment, the elder Kaplows behaved as if nothing at all had gone wrong. They relaxed comfortably on the living room sofa, talking about their trip, the weather in Miami. Art and Ellen listened patiently, taking a measure of comfort from their talk. They inquired about the children who were at school as if no shadow could possibly affect their future. His father himself raised casually the question of Art's position in the firm and his wife sensibly suggested that they discuss it privately in the kitchen. Art went over the story again, stressing his patience, his concern over his usefulness to the firm. But Posner stood in the way, Oscar playing along with him because of his dependence. Art did all he could to work with them but it was impossible. As far as he could see, there was one solution—and that was to fire Posner. Oscar and he could work out their differences easily.

"You know," his father confided, "I don't blame you for what you did. I would have done the same."

"Oscar and I together can run your factory. I've had ten years on my own. I know the trade."

"You tried your best. It's not your fault."

"Do you call him a good manager?" Art asked with returning confidence. "He opposes any change that isn't his own."

"But I can't let him go," his father said, shaking his head.

"Would you keep a man who doesn't want to know his costs?" Art's voice rose high in alarm as he searched the older man's face.

"He is a capable man," his father said, unyielding.

"And have me go back to the factory under the same conditions?" Art asked feelingly.

"No. . . ."

"I get it." Impulsively Art's open hand smashed down on the kitchen table. "So this is how you set things right!" His anger welled up uncontrollably, wheeled him wildly around; a sudden revulsion forced him into flight to the living room. His ringing appeal sought the two frightened women.

"This man who calls himself my father stands by and lets them force me out of his factory!" Mr. Kaplow whitened, followed him into the room, sat down weakly in a chair. He turned his face aside as from a driving rain.

"Please . . . control yourself," his stepmother pleaded. Art went on unheeding.

"He tells me he wants us together . . . the family. He wants to be a father to us. He says he wants security for his grandchildren." Rage elbowed sarcasm aside. Mr. Kaplow turned to him in a towering righteousness.

"Do you think you're the only one? What of my obligation to Posner—his family?" Art was stunned momentarily by this surprising argument. Then he saw the hypocritical force of it—the galling enormity. He thought:

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"That I should recognize the other's right by depriving myself of mine."

"What of your grandchildren . . . their needs, forgetting us?" Ellen demanded. His father didn't answer, as if in sculpture. His decision was set in a death grip.

"I know now why you left so early for Miami," Art said. "Very clever, weren't you." He sought a soft spot.

"That's not true!" his father returned, blazing up.

"You never had any intention of going through with it." It was the bitterest thing he could have said and he was satisfied that he had struck home. His father couldn't disprove it. He wasn't sure that it was so, but he wasn't giving him the benefit of the doubt. The precise truth was an irrelevance anyway, hiding in the shadows.

"I can understand why you are so upset," his father said with a surprising change of persuasion. He was resilient if nothing else, holding on to a last bridge to his son and daughter-in-law. "You think you've lost a piece of the business by not signing the legal papers before I left. Believe me, they were worthless. The majority of stock is still in my hands."

"So this is the good news you brought?" his son asked.

"How can you blame us?" Mrs. Kaplow interrupted, seemingly out of patience for having withheld comment. "After all, you did walk out of the factory."

Ellen glared at her. "You know well enough why he left."

"We came here for a friendly visit," she addressed Art as if he were sympathetic, "and all we get is insult."

"Maybe we should be more polite. It's only our livelihood," Ellen asserted.

Mrs. Kaplow threw off the last remnant of graciousness. "You people are always crying about your troubles. You'd think you were the only ones. Look at the world."

"It's easy for you to tell us to forget . . . with your mink stoles and diamonds," Ellen answered. The other uttered something incomprehensible through her anger. In the deadly silence that followed, they stared at each other, stalemated, obsessed, and uncommunicative. Art and his father sat breathing hard with averted faces, as if withdrawn from battle to nurse their wounds. Mr. Kaplow made a vague and futile gesture and gave up, dropping his arm hopelessly at his side.

"I'll tell you, Art. I'll be open," he said, rising with a violent wrench of will. His eyes drilled accusation. "It would never work out, not in a thousand years. We are different like day and night. You have no respect for me, no res-pect! And I . . . can't see your way." His head shook with endless denial. "Did you hear yourself lose your temper? It was full of hate, plain hate. Am I right?"

"Did you expect praise?"

"I remember years ago," his father said as if he hadn't heard, "when you raised your hands to me in an argument, you almost struck me. I haven't forgotten. I will never forget."

"And you were always the innocent party?"

"I could go on and on to show how you felt toward me."

"And this is letting bygones be bygones." Art suddenly felt something give way within, like the slipping of an underlying rock mass. It was hopeless, impossibly hopeless. In his frustration his wrath had dissolved into nothing, without a trace, leaving him empty-handed. Perversely, his vague emptiness might have veered blindly into a semblance of good will toward his father. Ellen turned to Art, and the prolonged look they gave each other almost shivered with apprehension of the truth.

Mrs. Kaplow stood up and spoke dryly. "Let's go, Harry. There's nothing more to be said."

Art and Ellen made no effort to help them as they went to the closet for their coats which they put on in complete silence. Following his wife through the open door, Mr. Kaplow paused and turned irresolutely, as if to consider the intervening space between himself and his son. He closed the door and left.

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THE BIBLE OF THE SYNAGOGUE

The Continuing Revelation

JAKOB J. PETUCHOWSKI

THIRTY-NINE books of ancient Hebrew literature—though Jewish tradition counts them as only twenty-four—have found their permanent place within the covers of a single volume. We call it the Bible, that is to say, the Book *par excellence*. Yet the modern Jew who reads this book, be it in the original Hebrew or in translation, has a choice not of one but of three different books.

There is first the Bible of modern scholarship. Here the "once-and-for-all-time" revelation at Mount Sinai, which is how the Law accounts for its own existence, is assumed to be a myth, a pious fraud, an attempt of later legislators to tie together the civil and cultic legislation which developed gradually through the centuries. What was once read as the "Law of Moses" turns out, on closer scholarly inspection, to be a mosaic of various codes and narrative traditions, having their provenance in many different times and places of Israel's history. The mixture of comfort and admonition, of reproof and promise, which so many prophetic books contain, is also sorted out into precise components. The occasion for each utterance is found in the religious and political history of the people. And modern scholars feel confident that they are able to say exactly who was a "prophet of doom" and who was not. If, then, the promise of a glorious future is found in the writings of a Prophet who is known to have been prophesying doom, it can easily be labeled a "later gloss." The same goes, of course, for any reference to the cult which might indicate a positive attitude toward institutional religion on the part of the Prophet. Since modern scholarship is convinced that the Prophets, or at any rate the pre-Exilic ones, were the enemies of the priesthood, such references must obviously have been inserted into the text by a later "priestly" editor or glossator.

If the modern reader's interest in early Hebrew literature is comparable to his interest in early Greek or Roman literature—if, that is, he wants to be truly "scientific" about it—he cannot afford to ignore the findings of modern scholars, or to close his eyes to their reconstruction of Biblical history. But this scholarly Bible is only *one* of the three Bibles available. Another Bible is that of individual piety and edification—the book read by the man looking for spiritual strength and comfort. To this Bible modern scholarship is irrelevant. When, for example, a Jew feels inclined to recite the Twenty-third Psalm either to express his gratitude for bounties received or at a funeral ceremony, he does not stop to consider whether King David was really its author. And when, in synagogue, the ethical monotheism of Judaism is presented to him in the words of Deuteronomy, the fact that modern scholars dismiss the authorship of Moses does not concern him. Or take the pun in Isaiah 7:9: *im lo ta-aminu ki lo te-amenu,* "If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established." What difference does it make to the man who turns to his Bible for inspiration and for edification if he is now told by modern scholarship that this text is corrupt, that the present wording has to be amended, and that the original actually went something like this: "If you will not believe, yes, if you will not believe, then ask a sign

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THE "Bible of the Synagogue," as JAKOB J. PETUCHOWSKI chooses to call it, is the Hebrew Bible as interpreted and enriched by centuries of Rabbinic commentary. Dr. Petuchowski, who is assistant professor of Rabbinics at Hebrew Union College, contributed "Faith as a Leap of Action" in May 1958.

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of the Lord your God." After all, it is the so-called corruption which has been the source of inspiration for so many generations, and not the religiously inferior "original" reading.

Clearly, then, the man who goes to his Bible for spiritual meaning need not be preoccupied with problems of authorship, dating, and textual reconstruction. What should be noted, however, is that we are not dealing with a question of "either/or." The Bible read for inspiration and edification, and the Bible read as a source book for the history of ancient Israel, can both be enjoyed and appreciated by one and the same person—though not necessarily at the same time. To cite a comparable example: there need be no conflict between following a minute textual analysis of *Hamlet* and enjoying a complete performance of the play.

THE very fact that there are hundreds of Christian Bible scholars who study the "Old Testament" scientifically without being converted to Judaism, and the fact that for the last 1,900 years Christians have been using the Hebrew Bible for inspirational purposes without thereby abandoning their Christian faith, should make it quite clear to us that there is no necessary bridge leading from either the Bible of modern scholarship or from the Bible of personal edification to Judaism as it has developed during the last two millennia. And yet, while it would be a mistake to assume that 20th-century Judaism is co-extensive with the "Old Testament," Judaism nevertheless claims that it is *based* upon the Hebrew Bible, that it is the "Religion of Torah," and that all its major beliefs and practices have evolved out of, or can be derived from, the teachings of Biblical prophets, sages, and legislators.

To understand this claim we have to understand the *third* Bible available to the modern Jew. I should like to call it the Bible of the Synagogue. But before describing this particular Bible in greater detail, I want to glance at the position the Bible occupies in Protestant and Catholic Christianity respectively.

One of the great victories claimed by the Protestant Reformation was to have made the Bible available to the people at large. This was accomplished not only by providing vernacular translations, but also, and perhaps above all, by releasing the individual from dependence upon a Church authority for interpreting what the Bible says. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, reasons as follows: without the agency of the Church, we would not today be in possession of the Bible. But if you trust the Church to transmit the Bible, you must likewise trust the Church to interpret it correctly—for without the Church you would not have a Bible to begin with.

Without pressing the analogy too far, it may be said that the Bible of the Synagogue is closer in conception to the Catholic point of view, with its insistence upon an authoritative ecclesiastical—and yet ever readily adaptable—interpretation of the Scriptures, than to the Protestant outlook, with its tendency to culminate in fundamentalism. This is not to say that the fundamentalist view is completely unknown in Jewish history. On the contrary, there was the 8th-century schismatic movement of the Karaites that rebelled against Rabbinic authority with the battle cry: "Search ye the Scriptures!" But the Karaites, after all, remained schismatic. Moreover, even they were compelled in the long run to develop authoritative hermeneutics of their own to counter the chaos of religious observance in their community that resulted from a multiplicity of individual interpretations.

Rabbinic Judaism, by contrast, consistently maintained, and was in fact based upon, the doctrine of an authoritative exposition of the Written Word, an exposition which remained oral for a long time, and which was believed to have been as distinctly revealed by God to Moses as was the Written Law itself. But since the teachers who transmitted the "Oral Law" are the very ones to whom we owe our possession of the text of the Scriptures—and this is the analogy to the Catholic position—it follows (as the 12th-century exegete Abraham Ibn Ezra main-

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tains in the preface to his Biblical commentary) that "there is no difference [in value] between the two Laws, for from the hands of our fathers have both of them been transmitted to us."

WHILE it is true that the Rabbis of the Talmud ascribed the origin of the Oral Law to the Mosaic Revelation, and while there is a statement in Rabbinic literature to the effect that "whatever a disciple of the wise may propound by way of explaining a law in the most distant future was already revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai," we would be wrong to ascribe to all the ancient Rabbis the belief that everything contained in the Talmud and other Rabbinic literature actually went back, in its present form, to Moses himself. The idea of religious evolution, or of "progressive revelation," was unknown to the Rabbinic sages, but they were very conscious of the fact that certain provisions of Jewish law had their origin in the need of meeting the particular requirements of specific times. They even admitted that some of their Scriptural exegesis was not so much aimed at eliciting the full implications of a text as at using the text to support a religious provision which they felt it necessary to enact.

Rabbinic literature contains a legend which tells how Moses was granted a last wish before his death—to sit in at a session of Rabbi Akiba's academy (2nd century C.E.). Akiba was expounding the Law in terms so completely unknown to Moses that the latter was stupefied. He only regained his composure when Akiba, asked by one of the students for the basis of his remarks, replied that he was teaching a tradition on the authority of Moses!

The sympathies of the modern reader are more likely to be enlisted by the veiled skepticism contained in this story than by the statement that any innovation in Scriptural exegesis likely to be made by a future scholar was already known to Moses himself. Nevertheless, the traditional literature contains a number of arguments in support of the antiquity of the Oral Law which cannot simply be brushed off as being naive.

Take, for example, the legal procedures of divorce. The only direct reference to these procedures in the Written Law is an incidental remark in the 24th chapter of Deuteronomy where the law is found which prohibits one's remarriage to his divorced wife, after the latter has had a second husband. This law is introduced by the following "if-clauses": "When a man takes a wife, . . . if then she finds no favor in his eyes, . . . and he writes her a bill of divorcement and puts it in her hands and sends her out of his house. . . ." Apologetes for the Oral Law point out that the Law nowhere tells us what exactly a "bill of divorcement" is, what terminology is to be contained therein, and how the whole matter of divorce is to be handled. They argue that Moses must have given a full explanation of all the details involved, and that this explanation was transmitted by word of mouth until it was incorporated into the Talmud. If we did not assume this, the scant reference to divorce in Deuteronomy would make no sense. Again, when we are enjoined in Leviticus 23:40 to take on the Festival of Succoth "the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook," and we find a universal consensus of opinion among Jews that the "fruit of goodly trees" is the *ethrog* (and no other kind of goodly fruit), and that "boughs of leafy trees" refer to the myrtle (and to no other kind of luxurious vegetation), we are, it is argued, forced to assume that Moses provided an oral interpretation that was preserved along with the written text.

No doubt, other explanations besides the Oral Law hypothesis could be advanced to account for the traditional divorce procedure, and for the choice of specific plants on the Festival of Succoth. But in a period like ours when Bible scholars, particularly those associated with the Scandinavian school, have shifted their attention from the earliest *literary* strata of the Hebrew Bible to the tracing of *oral traditions* which preceded the literary repercussions, it should not be too hard to accept the view that what we have

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in front of us, black-on-white, in the pages of the Bible, is only a part (perhaps only a minute part) of the totality of Biblical tradition which existed in oral form long before any of it was committed to writing. In other words, we can now maintain on scientific grounds that much of what is contained in the Hebrew Bible can be fully understood only in the light of the early *oral* traditions of Israel. But this is precisely what is implied by the doctrine of the Oral Law, which, as Ibn Ezra says, is of equal validity with the Written Law, "for from the hands of our fathers have both of them been transmitted to us."

To forestall any misunderstandings, it should be pointed out here that the phrase "Oral Law"—despite its wide currency in English—is not an adequate translation of the Hebrew *torah sheb'al peh*, the "Oral Torah." The word *torah* primarily means "teaching"—a word which embraces much else besides law. This distinction is important, for though the teachers of the "Oral Law" endeavored with all their might to achieve unanimity in the interpretation of the strictly legal passages of the Torah, the greatest leeway was allowed in the interpretation of the non-legal parts of the traditional "teaching." It was conceded, for example, that the words of the Torah lent themselves to seventy different interpretations. The verse spoken by Jeremiah in the name of God, "Is not my word like fire . . . and like a hammer which breaks the rock in pieces?" was understood as likening the divine word to the sparks resulting from the hammer's impact upon the rock—each spark contained part of the revelation, but no single spark its totality.

IT HAS already been pointed out that the ancient Rabbis did not share our modern concepts of religious evolution and "progressive revelation." They were, in fact, lacking in some of the most elementary notions of history which today we simply take for granted. What this implied in practice will be demonstrated here by a few illustrations.

The modern student of Judaism notes a distinct moral and religious advance in the Pharisaic-Rabbinic substitution of monetary compensation for the literal observance of the *lex talionis* in Exodus 21:24: "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." The Rabbis interpreted this verse to mean that the offender must compensate the victim for the loss of the eye or the tooth, rather than that the offender himself should be punished by having his own eye or tooth knocked out. But the Rabbis would never have admitted that this interpretation highlighted their own moral advance over the rough provisions of a primitive law. They would not have admitted that their interpretation was an innovation. If the law in Exodus 21:24 is said to demand monetary compensation, then this is what the law has *always* meant—from the very day on which it was committed to writing, as they believed, by Moses himself.

In accounting for a number of chronological inconsistencies in the Pentateuchal narratives, the Rabbis maintained the principle, "There is no earlier and no later in the Torah"; that is to say, it is not the intention of the Torah to teach us the precise chronological sequence of the events described. The Rabbis themselves were blissfully unconcerned with questions of "earlier" and "later" in their understanding of Biblical history and of its characters. A charming anachronism is, therefore, an inevitable part of all their descriptions of Biblical figures. It was, for example, inconceivable to them that the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who lived long before the Sinaitic Revelation, should have found such favor in the sight of God without having followed the dictates of the Torah. That they were pious men is both implied and explicitly stated in the Torah itself. But piety to the Rabbis could only mean piety as expressed in the forms known at the time of the Mishnah and the Gemara. Consequently they taught that the Patriarchs observed the Torah even before it was revealed to their descendants at Sinai! (Of course, an element of polemics and apologetics might have been involved in this particular case, since Paul and the early Church Fathers made much

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of the fact that Abraham was "saved" by "faith," and not by "works.")

This sort of thing can be laughed out of court by a sophisticated invocation of the canons of historical research. But such anachronisms sometimes serve as the vehicle for the transmission of profound spiritual insights. How much true Jewish sentiment, for example, is revealed in the Rabbis' view of King David! The wars which, according to the Bible, David so successfully fought are the "dialectics of Torah study." The armies he is said to have recruited are the bands of scholars and disciples with which he surrounded himself. And David never took a step without first consulting his *beth din*, his Rabbinical court of law. In short, if King David was to merit the love and esteem in which he was held by Israel, if he was in truth to be the ancestor of the Messiah, it was surely not too much to believe that he conducted himself no less "Jewishly" than a recognized Jewish leader in 3rd- or 4th-century Sura and Pumbeditha!

But this soft-pedaling of what few military glories there were in early Jewish history is typical of the whole Rabbinic outlook on life. You can detect it in the silence which the Talmud preserves on the whole chain of events leading up to the institution of the Chanukah festival. A victory of the Hasmoneans over the "Greeks" is indeed referred to, but only to set the stage for the "miracle of the oil" in a rededicated Temple. Judah the Maccabee is not even mentioned by name!

You find it also in the story of the Rabbi who visited a Palestinian town, and asked to see the "guardians of the city." When shown the local militia, he called them "the destroyers of the city," and pointed to the students in their school as the city's true "guardians."

Thus, while the so-called Higher Critics of the "Old Testament" may tell us that early Israel adopted YHWH as a "war god," the Rabbis, for their part, know of "the Book and the Sword which came down from heaven together," and they also know that Israel opted for the Book. Characteristic of their whole attitude are the early Rabbinic comments on the law about the altar of stone, found in Exodus 20:25f: "And if you make me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stones; for if you wield your tool [lit. "sword"] upon it you profane it. And you shall not go up by steps to my altar, that your nakedness be not exposed on it."

This is the Biblical law—which may be of archeological interest to the reader of the Bible of modern scholarship, and which could hardly be said to contain much material for the edification of the reader of the second Bible we have mentioned. But in the Bible of the Synagogue this is what we find: "The altar is made to prolong the years of man, and iron is made to shorten the years of man. It is not right for that which shortens life to be lifted up against that which prolongs life." Furthermore, "the stones for the altar do not see nor hear nor speak. Yet, because they serve to establish peace between Israel and their Father in Heaven, the Holy One, blessed be He, has said, 'Thou shalt lift up no iron tool upon them.' How much the more, then, should he who establishes peace between man and his fellowman, between husband and wife, between city and city, between nation and nation, between family and family, between government and government, be protected so that no harm should come to him!" And again, "the stones of the altar have no sense of what is proper or improper. Yet God said that you should not treat them disrespectfully. It is therefore but logical that you must refrain from treating with disrespect your fellowman, who is made in the image of Him by whose word the world came into being."

What should not be left out of sight, however, is the fact that, in addition to these spiritual implications, the Rabbis also recognized that the law about the altar of stone had a very real and concrete application in the sacrificial service of ancient Israel. This brings us to the question of how the Bible exegetes of the Synagogue looked upon their own work.

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The Talmudic sages established the norm that "no verse of Scripture ever departs from its literal meaning"; that is to say, homiletical interpretations should be clearly taken for what they are and not be allowed to encroach upon the literal application of the sacred text. Nevertheless, it is not too often that we find the sages abiding by this norm. The whole development of Rabbinic Judaism, in contrast to the early Sadducees and the later Karaites, necessitated a frequent disregard of the literal meaning of the Biblical text. It was only in the 13th century, and then possibly under the influence of the scheme which Christians had earlier adopted for their exegesis, that we find in Jewish sources a clear recognition of the four different methods of exegesis through which the Bible of the Synagogue came into being.

THERE is, first of all, the *p'shat,* the literal meaning of the text. Then there is *d'rash,* the homiletical exposition. Then comes *remez,* the typological and allegorical sense of the text. And finally there is *sod,* the secret meaning, which is the sense given to a passage by the mystics.

Naturally, there were many commentators who were striving to get at the *p'shat,* at the literal meaning of a text. But the *p'shat* turns out to be a very elusive thing. What one generation may regard as the literal meaning of a text may be considered as homiletics pure and simple by a succeeding age. Even in the case of modern scholarship, which professes to be interested in *p'shat* and nothing else, we can detect the traces of transient contemporary notions. If we think of the reconstruction of Israel's early religious history propounded by the Wellhausen school, with its clear-cut antagonism between the "prophetic" and the "priestly" elements and with the supposed "synthesis" represented by such books as Deuteronomy, we shall not go far wrong in seeing behind this "scientific and objective" approach to the "Old Testament" a very obvious precipitation of the dialectic of Hegelian philosophy, which was the dominant view at that time in all German institutions of higher learning. It is at least suggestive that the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis lost in popularity at the very time that Hegelian philosophy gave way to other philosophical constructions. That the latest fashions in Bible scholarship associated with the name of Rudolf Bultmann should go hand in hand with an Existentialist philosophy and a Neo-orthodox theology is also not surprising.

Of course, as long as the search for truth motivates human efforts, the search for *p'shat* will always remain a significant aspect of the Synagogue's approach to the Bible, even as it is the one and only professed aim of modern Biblical scholarship. But it should be clear that Judaism, as it has developed over the millennia, is not now, if it ever has been, co-extensive with the literal meaning of the text of the Hebrew Bible.

That is why the Rabbis recognized the importance of *d'rash,* the derivation of the text's implicit meaning—as they understood it. Thus, the comments quoted above on the law about the altar of stone would be considered *d'rash* on the text of which the *p'shat* is merely concerned with the prohibition of the use of hewn stone for the erection of an altar. On the other hand, to refer to another illustration we have already mentioned, the interpretation of the Biblical *lex talionis* in terms of monetary compensation would be considered the actual *p'shat* of that text—notwithstanding the quite different *p'shat* which ancient Sadducees and modern scholars would find here.

A *d'rash* interpretation may keep rather close to the wording of the Biblical text, but it may also go to extremes. It may account for a grammatical irregularity, such as the mention of stones (in the plural) in Genesis 28:11 and the mention of only a single stone in Genesis 28:18, by telling us that all the stones at Beth-el were vying for the honor of having the Patriarch use them as a head-rest, so that God united them all into one single stone. But, in addition to perpetuating such folkloristic elements, *d'rash* interpretation also served as a channel for

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the transmission of Platonic notions to the Jewish academy. Thus, in a comment on the first verse of the Bible, it is said that the Torah preceded the creation of the world. God is pictured as consulting the Torah in the act of creation just as an architect would consult his blueprints. In fact, any attempt at systematizing Jewish theology is largely dependent on *d'rash* exegesis for source material on the Jewish outlook on life and Jewish dogmatics.

The method of *remez*, of finding an allegorical meaning in the Scriptures, was the method largely followed by the Hellenistic Jews of Alexandria, of whom Philo Judaeus (1st century C.E.) was the outstanding representative. It is extremely doubtful that the Alexandrian school of allegorical exegesis was known to, or had an influence upon, the representatives of the Rabbinic tradition. But there is one book in the Hebrew Bible where the only interpretation the Rabbis would consider legitimate was the allegorical. And this was the Song of Songs. Instead of taking literally the references in that book to the young lover and his beloved, the Rabbis maintained that the whole book was an allegory of the love between God and Israel. Though the allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs may have little to commend itself to the modern mind, it will still have to be conceded that we owe the canonization, and hence the very preservation, of this delightful book solely to this interpretation. Rabbi Akiba was thinking of the allegorical meaning when he exclaimed that, of all religious poetry, the Song of Songs was the "holy of holies." What should also not be overlooked in assessing the merits of the *remez* interpretation is the role which the Song of Songs has played—and played just because of the allegorical interpretation—in the history of Jewish piety, liturgy, and mysticism. Nor should we forget that, in the hands of a Maimonides, the method of *remez* applied to other parts of the Bible, to the "Wisdom Books" in particular, could be turned into an instrument of philosophical enlightenment.

The perspective of *sod* (lit. "secret") was that of the mystics, who maintained that every single word of the Torah had a deeper meaning than the obvious sense evident to those not initiated into the mysteries. As the Zohar puts it, to the ordinary bona fide Jew "we impart the revealed matters of the Torah. That is to say, we make known to him the general outlines, and we caution him about the strict observance of the commandments of the Torah. But no more—unless he rises to another level." And this "more" is understood as the "mysteries of the Torah, and the secrets of the Torah, which one need not reveal except to him who has reached a suitably higher level." Indeed, the very function of the Zohar, that major work of Jewish mysticism which, in its structure, represents a running commentary on the Torah, is to point out these "secret" meanings of the text. It is, moreover, sufficiently obscure in style and language to remain relatively inaccessible to the ordinary reader who comes to it without the requisite preparation.

Considering the doctrine of "emanation" and other neo-Platonic notions which play a major part in Jewish mysticism, it may be said that the method of *sod* provided another opportunity for philosophy to be assimilated to basic Jewish concepts. On the other hand, it must likewise be admitted that of all the ways of Jewish Bible exegesis the way of *sod* lent itself best to the most far-reaching aberrations.

WE MUST now turn to the question of *where* the Bible of the Synagogue can be found. There is no single book which contains it. The so-called "Rabbinic Bible," which reproduces the original text surrounded by some thirty-two commentaries and paraphrases, does indeed give us a representative selection of the various methods of exegesis we have discussed above. But it is a *selection* just the same.

In a sense, the Bible of the Synagogue is the *totality* of Rabbinic literature. The earliest part of that literature, the Tannaitic midrashim, took the form of running commen-

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taries, mostly of a legal character, on the Biblical text. The Mishnah, though not actually a running commentary like the Tannaitic midrashim, is nevertheless based on the Oral Law's understanding of Biblical legislation. The Gemara, which, together with the Mishnah, makes up the Talmud, is in a way a commentary on the Mishnah, while a considerable part of Jewish literature through the ages also took the form of commentaries and super-commentaries on the Talmud.

The various legal codes, of which type of literature the 16th-century *Shulchan Aruch* is perhaps the best-known example, are basically an attempt to present the Law of the Talmud in more accessible compendia, and, in their turn, they gave rise to a host of commentaries and super-commentaries. At their side there arose the literature of "Responsa," which, dealing with questions of the concrete application of Law, again reflected the Synagogue's understanding of the provisions of the Torah.

That homiletical literature is by definition nothing but the application of the method of *d'rash* to the exegesis of the Bible goes without saying. And we have already seen that even the Zohar purports to be a commentary on the Torah. What may not be so well known is that even the philosophical literature of Judaism is, in the last analysis, a form of Bible exegesis. It represents an attempt at reconciling current philosophical notions with the doctrines derived from the Bible, or, where that is not possible, at defending the Torah against philosophical attacks. For example, a considerable portion of the *Guide for the Perplexed* by Maimonides is given over to the interpretation of Biblical expressions; and even the works of such moderns as Hermann Cohen and Franz Rosenzweig are to a very large extent concerned with a philosophical exegesis of the Hebrew Bible.

The various branches of Rabbinic literature are overwhelming in their sheer bulk. But perhaps we shall be able to understand why, in the academies of Eastern Europe, Talmud study was stressed at the expense of Bible reading. It used to be said, and not always without justification, that the yeshiva student of Eastern Europe knew his Bible only from Biblical quotations which appear in the Talmud and other Rabbinic literature. And when *Time* magazine, in a recent issue, identified the "Jewish Bible" with the Talmud, the mistake was more of a bibliographical than of a historical or existential nature. For the Bible of the Synagogue is not identical with the literal meaning of the "Old Testament" text, but it is that text as refracted through the lenses of Rabbinic literature.

IT WAS inevitable that Reform Judaism, in its formative period, should have been somewhat antagonistic to the Talmud. After all, Reform was rebelling against Talmudic law as interpreted by the official rabbinate of the 18th and 19th centuries. There was also the obvious influence of Deism. Just as the Deists had claimed that there was a core of the true "Religion of Nature" in the Bible which had become overlaid with the productions of a fraudulent priestcraft, so *mutatis mutandis* the early Reformers argued that the Bible as a whole represented true religion, whereas Rabbinic literature was but an overgrowth of insipid accretions, which had to be cleared away in order to restore Judaism to its pristine purity.

The emphasis given to Bible studies in Reform rabbinical seminaries was, therefore, the logical consequence of the movement's original motivation. But whereas early Reform, by emphasizing the Bible at the expense of the Talmud, merely righted the balance which had been upset in the East European *yeshivoth,* there is something incongruous in Reform's retaining this particular emphasis to the present day, while its theology has in the meantime changed by giving prominent expression to the doctrine of "progressive revelation."

"O Lord," we read in the latest edition of the Union Prayer Book, "open our eyes that we may see and welcome all truth, whether shining from the annals of ancient revelations or reaching us through the seers

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of our own time; for Thou hidest not Thy light from any generation of Thy children that yearn for Thee and seek Thy guidance."

Now, the enthusiastic attempt of the Reform schools of higher Jewish learning to get at the scientific *p'shat,* at the original meaning of Biblical texts freed from all glosses and corruptions, would be perfectly intelligible if Reform Judaism believed that Revelation was what the modern theologian would call *einmalig,* occurring only once and for all time. If such were the case, then it would be vitally important, would, in fact, be a *conditio sine qua non,* to determine the precise wording of what God had actually said when He made His one and only Revelation.

But this is precisely what Reform Judaism does *not* believe. Yet, if Revelation is "progressive," if God does not hide His light from any generation of His children that seeks His guidance, then there is no compelling reason why the one thousand years of Biblical literature should merit more attention than the two thousand years of Rabbinic literature. With all the importance which must duly be ascribed to the question of what a Moses or an Isaiah did or did not say, by the terms of reference provided by the doctrine of "progressive revelation" this question could not possibly be more important than a study of the teachings of Rabbis Akiba and Ishmael in the 2nd century, of Rab and Samuel in the 3rd, or of Nachmanides in the 13th. Ironically enough, the doctrine of "progressive revelation" makes the study of Rabbinic literature no less mandatory for Reform Judaism than the dogma of the "twofold Torah revealed at Sinai" makes it for Orthodoxy.

I AM NOT suggesting that the scientific study of the Hebrew Bible should be abandoned. The quest for "origins" will always retain its fascination for scholars of a certain bent of mind. It is also proper that the spokesmen of modern Judaism, and even the laity, should have some idea of what the Hebrew Bible looks like when viewed from the perspective of textual criticism. But due recognition should be given to the undeniable fact that Judaism as we know it—yes, even Reform Judaism—can be linked to the original documents of the Bible only by way of the chain of Rabbinic tradition. This fact, once it is fully grasped, will not only call for greater proficiency in Rabbinic literature on the part of the modern rabbi, but it will also make it incumbent upon the modern Synagogue to devise and provide the best possible means of transmitting this literary heritage to the 20th-century Jew.

This Jew should still be able to study and enjoy the Bible of modern scholarship, and he can be as radical in his historical and textual hypotheses as he wishes. He should also be able to read the Bible for purposes of inspiration and edification, without anybody's telling him: "So-and-so says the verse means this. And so-and-so says the verse means that." But when it comes to that Bible which is the foundation of Judaism, the modern Jew must learn to re-discover the "Bible of the Synagogue," that repository of "progressive revelation" of which we have here tried to give a brief description.

There is something to be said, after all, for the old Rabbinic reconstruction of a dialogue said to have taken place between God and Moses. When God revealed the Torah, Moses wanted to write it all down—both that part of the Revelation which became known as the Written Law, and that part which was to be called the Oral Law. But God would not have it so. He said to Moses: "There will come a time when the nations of the world will take the Written Law away from you, and claim that *they* (not you) are Israel. Therefore I am giving you the Pentateuch in writing. But its true interpretation, the Mishnah, the Talmud, and the Aggadah, I am giving you orally. They will be what distinguishes Israel from the nations of the world."

Perhaps that is why to this day the "Old Testament" may be read as the first part of the Christian Bible, whereas "*Chumash* with *Rashi*" is the Jew's real link to the event at Sinai.

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

"SANCTIFY THE ORDINARY"

An Excerpt from the Writings of Abraham Yehudah Chein

RABBI ABRAHAM YEHUDAH CHEIN was born in Russia in 1878, and lived in Jerusalem during the latter part of his life, up to the day of his death, which happened on Yom Kippur day, 1957. He was known to many in Israel for his essays on Jewish themes published in a variety of periodicals. Those who heard him speak at public functions or in more intimate gatherings at his home knew him as a man of distinguished appearance and an unusual style of expression. His "Torah" was marked by an originality of thought that set it apart from other Orthodox rabbinic writing of his day, and even from the Habad Hasidic school, to which he belonged by family descent and spiritual training. This very originality, however, made him something of a tragic and lonely figure in his later years. He was eloquently committed to pacifism and non-violence during the days when the Jewish community in Palestine was battling the Arabs and the British. He tried to relate his readings of Tolstoy and Kropotkin to his own mystical Jewish background, and at times it seemed as if he was caught "between the suns," as the Hebrew expression goes: that is, between the rising sun of a new age and the setting sun of the European Jewish life which he profoundly appreciated. Rabbi Chein was proud of his genealogy, which could be traced back to a distinguished 16th-century North African rabbi, the "Rif." There is now in preparation in Israel a Hebrew book on Rabbi Chein and his writings. Below I offer—in my own translation from the Hebrew—an excerpt from one of his essays, illustrating the kind of fresh, provocative view he habitually took in examining matters of Jewish life and thought.—HERBERT WEINER

"DAYS of heaven on earth" are these days, these Sabbaths of God and festivals of Israel. . . . Days lowered from on high, from "the quarry of the higher days," to the house of the Jews, to the dining room, the bedroom, even the kitchen. . . . The over-all goal and mission of these days . . . is "to raise oneself, if only by a hand's breadth, above the ground: if only for a moment, above the day." There are two aspects of this effort. One is to rise above that which is low, to cast oneself off from the lower things, from the flatness and filth, from the ordinary and the trite. . . . The second, and higher, aspect of this attempted ascent is related to the first, yet different. It is "to raise up the low itself," to sanctify the ordinary. Not flee from it and not dismiss it, but sanctify it. The *kiddush* is deliberately performed at the festive table. It is the place of food, of the ordinary physical act, that is made holy. An "altar is to be made of the table." . . .

And along with and beside this one overall principle common to all these days, are several other characteristics which they share. . . . Elements out of which is created a new world, a new man. There exist many of these common elements. A few seem to be central and fundamental; they are three in number. One might be called the psychology of "poverty"; the second the element of "mystery"; the third the principle of renewal or "revival." These are common to all the Chosen Days, previews of that age which the Prophets termed "end of days."

* * *

Consider now the psychology of poverty, and how it runs like a purple thread through the warp and woof of our holiday calendar. Money is not to be touched on Sabbath and the holidays! Is there another people or group in the world who in their

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days of rest and joy refrain from handling money? We are that people—we, the people of the storekeepers, "who have no other ideal except the dirty coin." Precisely with us does the law insist that, at moments of elevation, of man's unity with his roots and with the root of the world, we are forbidden even to touch money. The emphasis of this great principle, and its elaboration, you find in all the Holy Days . . . each according to its particular laws. For example:

Sabbath. One should search his clothes before Sabbath. This is a high law of the Sabbath—to break off all relations with "the pocket."

Shavuoth. The law regarding the first fruits: the containers of gold in which the rich brought their first fruits were set down in the outer courtyard: only baskets of straw could be taken into the inner courtyard. On approaching the mount of the Temple, even King Agrippa bore his wicker basket on his own shoulder.

And with respect to a higher aspect of Shavuoth, namely, the occasion of the giving of the Torah, the day of Sinai: where does the drama take place but in a desert? in abandoned and ownerless land, free from discussion of ownership and property—great stress is laid on this detail—the Torah is a "gift in the wilderness," for, "just as the desert is available to all so is the gift."

Succoth. Exit from the fine mansion, from the secure and fortified, to the temporary, to the *succah* and shack. Nor may the booth be tall, and it may be habitable only for a short period of days. The rain must be able to fall into it—from beginning to end, chapter of poverty.

Pesach. It is explicitly noted that with "rich matzah" one cannot fulfill one's obligations. Thus even the food, the matzah, is a symbol of poverty, called "bread of affliction."

Yom Kippur. No food and no shoes, and in the garments of the dead. Hungry and barefooted in simple flaxen gown; white clothes symbolic of absolute poverty, without embellishment. And the ceremony of the day: the one selected man, the High Priest, at the climax of the Day of Atonement, must be clothed only in white garments when he enters as one before the One, in this one place (the Holy of Holies), and at this one moment in the ritual—he must cast off all the glamor of gold. . . . [It is indicated] that all the previous assuming of the golden garments in the ritual was but in order that he might shed them. If he had worn the white previously, the negation of the gold would not have been noticed. To put on clothes of gold and then to shed them to teach that in order to enter, within and within, one has to shed first the gold, shed even the glory and beauty of the gold, even the gold of the holy clothes and of the high priesthood must be shed.

Rosh Hashanah. "A shofar covered with gold may not be used, its sound is invalid."

THIS quality of purity and cleanliness which inheres in poverty, and the recognition of gold as a defect in holiness, passes like a thread through the whole life of Torah and holiness.

"A Torah which is written in gold is invalid." . . . It happened once that Alexander of Macedonia wrote the Torah in gold and sent it to the Elders. They "put it away" [rather than destroy it] because the Holy Name was mentioned within it. Thus, only the mention of the Holy Name rescued it from burning; but it was invalid, it could not be repaired.

"There was a flute in the Temple, and it was smooth and of reed. And it was of the days of Moses. The King commanded that it should be covered with gold, and lo, its tone was no longer sweet. They removed its coating and its voice was sweet again."

And finally, Israel's greatest sin is represented as the "golden calf," and the Rabbis call the evil inclination "king," "old and foolish," . . . all his attributes emanating from gold: his self-adornment, his pride, his strength; but the good impulse is called "poverty-stricken"—"a child, poor and wise." The Rabbis proclaim: "There is no wealth before Him who spake and brought forth the world"; "The son of David will come only when no coin remains in the pocket." And behold, the Messiah himself, he who fulfills prophecy and is the peak of perfection, is described as a poor man, riding on a donkey. Not a lofty lord, flying on eagles of fire, from whose nostrils pour forth flame, whose clothes are laden with all the treasures of Korach and armed with the bows of Nimrod—no, only a poor wretch, riding a donkey.

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ON THE HORIZON

JOB ON BROADWAY

MacLeish's Man and the Bible's

HERBERT WEINER

"I WONDER, Mr. MacLeish, if you realize how unlikable your character J.B. really is?"

The poet seemed to start back in unpleasant surprise at the question asked by a lady sitting in the rear of the Anta Theater off Broadway.

"Why, no. I don't think that's the opinion of most people. I certainly don't think so. Of course, J.B. is supposed to have the characteristics of a typical American businessman. He is successful and has a lot of self-confidence—but I happen to like that particular American characteristic."

This question was the only discordant note in an otherwise mutually flattering discussion between the author of *J.B.* and more than a hundred ministers and rabbis who remained after a performance of what has been hailed as the "best play of this or perhaps many seasons." The clergy were grateful to the management for having supplied them with free tickets, and also complimented by the deference with which Mr. MacLeish greeted their questions and comments. Sitting comfortably on the stage of the theater as if at his desk in his Harvard classroom, the ruddy-faced, white-haired poet had begun the discussion by assuring them that his "own Biblical and theological knowledge was very superficial" as compared with theirs. But he had felt compelled to write *J.B.* after witnessing the bombing of London during the Second World War. Though the play was obviously based on the Book of Job, it was, MacLeish assured his audience, only like the "type of tin-can structure which is sometimes found erected in the shade of ancient, monumental ruins." Still, he would be happy if some of the ministers offered their comments on the theological and philosophical themes implied in his play.

After a moment's hesitation, an elderly man rose to suggest that the solution advanced by the Book of Job to the problem of evil was "that there was no solution." MacLeish nodded his head in recognition of the wisdom of this idea, adding that he had been influenced in his own thinking by an analysis of Job written by the psychoanalyst Carl Jung, who suggested that the Book of Job "adumbrated the love-theme of the New Testament." Some of the rabbis in the audience smiled at their wives, for the gentleman who had provoked this answer was himself named Jung, an Orthodox rabbi.

"With regard to your thought about God being either 'not good or not God,'" another white-haired gentleman asked, did not Mr. MacLeish "feel himself leaning away from the traditional God-concept?" Again the rabbis looked at each other knowingly. The questioner was Mordecai Kaplan, founder of the Reconstructionist movement, and for many years an advocate of a reformulated "God-concept." "No," MacLeish said. He felt that the "creator" God of the Old Testament was particularly meaningful in an

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atomic age with its imminent possibilities of universal destruction. A moment later, as if mindful of the New Testament section of his audience, the poet added that personally he felt the only ultimate answer to the problems raised by the Book of Job was the idea of "God as love."

"Of course, my knowledge of Biblical scholarship or theology is very poor," MacLeish emphasized again, "but then it seems that the scholars themselves are in disagreement—even about the authenticity of the chapter which strikes me as the most important in the book—namely the last chapter." In this chapter Job is recorded as receiving back his health, and increasing his wealth and number of children far beyond his original condition. It is usually considered as an anti-climax to the main argument in the Book of Job. But Professor MacLeish sees in it the "answer" to the problems posed, namely, the willingness of Job, despite all that has happened, "to begin all over again and affirm life." This is J.B.'s response to Satan who is, according to MacLeish, an "anti-life" force. Job rejects the invitation of both Satan and his wife to "curse God and die." Instead, he accepts his wife back and is willing to pick up the threads and go on. Nor is this simply an animal-like type of survival, MacLeish stressed to the listeners. "It involves a choice, and such life affirmation must have as its coefficient love—the affirmation of another person's worth." To the extent that the Book of Job has an answer, it is this affirmation of the possibility of life and love despite everything, which is expressed in the conclusion of the book; as J.B.'s wife says, and MacLeish quoted from his own lines:

Blow on the coal of the heart, my darling,
—it's all the light now. . . .
The candles in the churches are out,
The lights have gone out in the sky,
Blow on the coal of the heart.

A few minutes later the author of the play looked at his watch and said he had to catch a midnight train to Boston.

On their way out of the theater, the clergymen received mimeographed sheets containing the critics' reviews of the play, which had not been presented in the daily press because of the New York newspaper strike.

"One of the memorable works of the century, as drama, and as spiritual inquiry," wrote Brooks Atkinson, drama critic of the New York *Times*. ". . . The glory of MacLeish's play is that as in the Book of Job, J.B. does not curse God. When he is reunited with his wife, two humble but valiant people accept the universe, agree to begin life all over again, expecting no justice but unswerving in their devotion to God. The performance is magnificent. . . ." The other reviews were at least as enthusiastic. *J.B.* was definitely a hit, notwithstanding any feeling about the "unlikability" of its central character, or a reaction on the part of many that the latter half of the play was a letdown after the high tension of the opening.

A few days after this meeting with the clergy, Professor MacLeish was still concerned wtih the ending of his play. He indicated as much to a large audience which had gathered to hear him in a New Jersey temple. "I'll have to leave precisely at 9:15 P.M.," the author warned a nervous committee which had arranged his lecture, "in order to see a change that is being tried in the last scene."

The committee agreed to release him on time, and introduced the poet to the several hundred people, some of whom had come from New York. Everyone listened with rapt attention while MacLeish described his play and offered some comments like those which he had delivered to the clergymen. On this evening the distinguished poet found it more difficult to repress his enthusiasm not only for his own work but for some other things. The audience was assured that MacLeish had not come to plug his play, since "You probably couldn't get tickets now even if you wanted them—though I hope you will at least manage to enter the theater and see the absolutely magnificent setting by Boris Aronson." The poet generously attributed the success of his play to the "team" presenting it on Broadway. Raymond Massey, he said with a smile, had been playing Lincoln so long that he was just right for the role of God. And Christopher Plummer was easily "the greatest actor alive." The poet went on in this superlative mood to praise some of the "greatest lines of all

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literature," namely the 38th chapter of Job, whose opening verse he quoted: "Who is this that darkeneth wisdom without counsel. . . ." Later the poet offered another of the "greatest lines and thoughts ever written" from one of the "greatest poets," W. B. Yeats: life really begins when you know it to be a tragedy! "I hope that even if you don't like poetry," MacLeish suggested in his best classroom style, "you will pick up a volume of W. B. Yeats."

As an extra tidbit, MacLeish gave his audience a preview of some letters which were part of an exchange between him and "the greatest living" stage director, "Gadge" Kazan. The letters were soon to appear in *Esquire,* which MacLeish felt was "far superior to the quarterly magazines." He quoted some lines from Kazan's memos to himself on the play, including one noting that the play illustrated the "glory of man."

After several questions, the poet told his audience that he had to return in time to catch some changes in the last scene of the play, which he and Kazan were trying to "fix up." The fact is, however, that even after these changes had been made, there still remained viewers of *J.B.* who found its ending "disappointing" and its central character "unlikable." The question is whether the "letdown" which so many feel at the end of the play is inherent in the Jobian tragedy as written in the Bible, or only inherent in MacLeish's interpretation of that difficult and most serious of books.

Of course, MacLeish does not claim that the characters of *J.B.* accurately represent the *dramatis personae* of the Biblical book. J.B.'s comforters are a psychoanalyst, a priest, and a leftist, all rather schematically portrayed, who have no connection at all with the comforters of the original Job; they are introduced with the remark that "each generation has its own comforters." And the American businessman J.B. is of course markedly different from the pastoral man of Uz. But MacLeish does mean to have his protagonists confront the same basic issues which were faced in the Book of Job. According to MacLeish, the greatness of J.B. ". . . is not only that he refuses to curse God and die"; he is supposed to demonstrate a "faith" in God and His goodness which disaster and the evidence of life cannot shake. Above all, *J.B.*—and according to MacLeish the Book of Job—would turn us to "love" as the only way of facing the "insoluble" problem presented in both the Biblical book and the play.

Now this "love" theme of MacLeish brings to mind a little noticed and somewhat strange fact about the Book of Job: it is one of the few books in the Bible which does not even mention the word "love." It is not difficult to understand why the absence of "love" in the Book of Job should so often go unnoticed. Most religious texts of the Judeo-Christian tradition, including the books of the Bible, conjoin the words "fear" and "love" in describing the relation which ought to exist between God and man. The interpreters of religious tradition frequently explain why both words are important. They represent basically opposite movements in the man-God relationship. Fear or awe emphasizes the omnipotent and transcendent qualities of God, love assures man that God, despite His transcendent power, will not abandon the righteous who fulfill his Law. Fear emphasizes the sense of separation and distance. Love brings together. Only an assumption that God loves, or is at least compassionately interested in man, opens the way for men to ask the infinite God to "compress" himself and allow his actions to be judged by man's understanding of justice and mercy. This, perhaps, is the thought implied in the midrash describing God as creating the world according to the "architectural plan of the Torah"—that is, voluntarily subjecting His acts to moral standards as man understands morality. Without such self-limitation, as the theologians call it, it is impossible to even speak of a transcendent God in terms of "good" or "great," since all his qualities transcend our finite understanding.

Furthermore, it is ultimately "love" to which the Judeo-Christian tradition turns for an explanation of why an infinite God should take pains with finite man, and why man should bless God and follow His directions even when there is no commensurate response—"To serve God not for reward, but out of love." It is only love which can explain a willing acceptance of suffering—"even as a child loves his parent, or a parent his child, regardless of questions of justice."

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And what else but love could evoke the pathetic quotation from Job offered by a Spanish Jewish exile who after persecution and shipwreck buries his last child on a desert isle and rises to say: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." It is love and not fear of God which is finally invoked by Rabbi Akiba when he replies to his pupils who are horrified at seeing him tortured to death: "Blessed am I Akiba, that I can now fulfill the commandment to love God with all my soul—that is, by giving Him my soul." And it is of course love that is finally evoked to explain the act of innocent suffering which is at the heart of the Christian faith.

It is not surprising then that MacLeish should turn to love in explaining Job. But why then does the play *J.B.* with all its "affirmation of life" and "blowing on the coal of the heart" seem to have less of an "answer" than the inarticulate surrender in the Biblical Book of Job which has no mention of love.

ACTUALLY, the arguments of the Book of Job appear surprising when placed beside the kind of interpretation offered by a play like *J.B.* For example, it is not only "love" which is conspicuously absent in the Biblical story, but even the notion of "faith" which so many read into the text, thinking that it should be there. True, there are many admissions in the Book of Job of man's limited powers of knowledge, but it is also recognized by all the characters that man can depend on nothing but his limited facilities of perception in coming to any conclusions. No one in the Book of Job cries out "Just believe" in spite of what your mind and eye see or don't see. In the debate between the Biblical Job and his friends, all parties accept the fact that the argument for the existence of a moral order in the universe must be based on our direct or indirect experience, and not on some "leap of faith." There is no question of "faith" in God the Creator of the world, whose power transcends man's imagination. The only question is whether this awful, powerful God is interested in running His creation according to principles which man recognizes as just and good. By a variety of arguments, Job's comforters try to prove that the world is under a moral law, and that Job's suffering is therefore deserved. Job claims that his sufferings and what he can see of suffering in the world would prove the contrary. The evil suffered by man has no relation to his guilt. And Job refuses to perjure himself—"I will keep my integrity." This he does, only laying his finger upon his lips in silent submission to an awesome fact—that a God who is transcendent and all-powerful cannot be spoken of or questioned in terms of justice or injustice, in fact cannot be "judged" by any of man's limited standards.

The amazing thing about the Book of Job is that it pictures God as accepting Job's refusal to admit a moral law in the universe in preference to the Orthodox view of his comforters. "My wrath is hurled against thee and against thy two friends; for ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right as My servant Job hath."

It is the "defenders" of God who refuse to accept the full implications of God's omnipotence, and refuse to realize that a transcendental God makes silly all man's discussions about His goodness and justice. Job is the only one who finally "girds up his loins" and faces the full implications of God's awesome transcendence. In this sense, it is not "man's glory" that is being exalted in the Book of Job, but man's infinite littleness before overwhelming power. The solution, to the extent that there is a solution to the questions raised by Job and his friends about the suffering of the innocent, is given in the 38th chapter. "I uttered that I understand not; things too wonderful to me, which I knew not. . . . I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

The awful meaning signified by an infinite God, namely that He is beyond any of man's questions, was until now a matter of secondary knowledge—"the hearing of the ear"—but now God's infinite power and transcendence is known by a vivid personal experience. Before this religious experience all questions are crushed and dissolved. The experience spoken of here is what Rudolf Otto calls the "numinous"—the experience of the "mysterium tremendum." To the extent that the Book of Job offers a solution, it is this experience of "seeing" God.

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Now it is precisely this dimension of experience which is absent in MacLeish's *J.B.* From the first to the last scene, all the characters in the play fail to convey anything of the religiosity which is supposed to pervade their lives. The references to God are as artificial and external as the masks which Raymond Massey and Christopher Plummer assume to play their roles. J.B.'s professions of faith are of a kind with the confidence expressed by a business tycoon in the reliability of his latest IBM machine. Toward the end of the play J.B. utters the lines from Job about "seeing" God, but no one, including the actors, audience, or, apparently, the playwright, is convinced that this seeing God has any real meaning for the thought development of the play. Nor is this "seeing" of God the same as the bits of poetic marveling about the intricacy of the universe which MacLeish's pen places alongside the magnificent lines of the Bible. And the religious experience of a "mysterium tremendum" is not a poetic appreciation of the wonders of creation. Since this religious experience is not in any sense a real element in *J.B.*, the play must go on to try for a different climax and "solution." MacLeish is unwilling to leave Job's questions crushed before the numinous inscrutability of God: this experience of the numinous has no such convincing meaning for MacLeish as it had for Job.

The solution which MacLeish advances, even while declaring that there is no solution, is the "affirmation of life and love," for which, indeed, he claims to find grounds in the last chapter of the Bible Job. There is perhaps something fresh about MacLeish's effort to find meaning in lines which most scholars have considered to be a rather formal addition to the Job drama. The friends and family who bring a bit of money or a gift of property are, MacLeish reminds us, better comforters than those bringing abstract theological arguments. It may be that the description of Job's later life, when he possesses more children and more property than ever, does point up his willingness to "pick up the strings again and go on." But the impulse to survive and build again after tragedy is a rather basic drive; we may ask whether it really must be accompanied, as MacLeish says, by the "coefficient of love."

On the other hand, MacLeish has every right as a poet to read love into the Book of Job even though it is conspicuously absent. As I have already suggested, it is the love theme to which the Judeo-Christian tradition finally turns in its effort to understand the problem of innocent suffering. But love as understood by this religious tradition is not the "love" MacLeish speaks of. The first deals with the relation between man and God, the second between man and man. Not that these dimensions of experience are necessarily separate from each other. On the contrary, in the Judeo-Christian tradition the claim is usually made that they must go together. This is the thought of Hillel and Akiba—that the way to loving God is through love of man. But we can also find, within the same tradition, a claim that the fullest relation with God involves a disengagement from human love. More than Judaism, Christianity has suggested that human attachments can interfere with a full man-God love relation—"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." But even Judaism does not blur the two-dimensional religious-human love relation into a purely secular horizontal relationship. This is precisely what MacLeish does. The play begins by posing the great vertical questions—the relation between man and God—and concludes with answers that have very little to do with the connection between man and God. The problem posed by Job in the Bible is not one of human relations, or whether we can derive some warmth and meaning in life from "blowing on the coal" of the human heart. Job wants to know whether there is heart as well as power in the universe. This is an important question to man —even to non-religious man—and *J.B.* achieves tremendous opening force when it brings us to ask it. Hence the disappointment when this question is resolved or flattened into a secular solution no different from the usual receipt for happiness offered in any number of best-seller psychological "comforters" of our age. Perhaps the real reason why *J.B.* leaves one disappointed is that it is essentially a secular play treating religious problems.

Not that secular praise of love and life-affirmation is a slight thing. It may even be the only meaningful answer available to us in a secular age, more meaningful than calls to "see" God. There is nothing ignoble about

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a secular answer—unless it pretends to be more—and *J.B.* does. Even through the tinny loudspeaker conveying the Biblical text, we catch the flavor of the dread numinous that struck Job dumb. For a moment we confront the most awesome questions of existence. Then we are offered an answer so incommensurate as to be a non sequitur.

Why in the world should J.B. go on blessing God? We can understand why Job should prostrate himself before a personal religious vision of God's numinous power (incidentally, even Job does not bless God finally—he only stops questioning Him). We can understand why the great lovers of God may bless their "wounds of love." But why should a person whose basic love experience is confined to the level of human relation go on blessing God after all that has happened to him? There is something insensitive, even fatuous, in such blessing. Even Satan seems more "likable" and more sensitive to the horrors of an immoral universe than a man who offers blessings which do not emerge either out of the dissolving awe, or the scalding love, of God.

This is the problem of the last scene in the play, which cannot be "fixed up" by any changes in lines. The questions which Job asks, and which *J.B.* also claims to ask, call for an accounting between man and God. They cannot be resolved by advice to "blow on the coal" of the human heart. If there is no divine heart, then there would seem to be more "glory" in the man who, if not cursing, at least refuses to bless.

YOM KIPPUR LAMENTATION

DACHINE RAINER

KNOWING not the quantity nor precise degree of my sinning,
And advised to abandon all antiquated notions of guilt,
I atone for the sin of omission:

That I know not where my Lord resides
Nor in whose house I dwell,
That I know not, all else besides,
The dimensions of Heaven, the volume of Hell.

That I rear in wanton heresies
One younger than I, less innocent,
Whose perception of oracular verities
Is unmoved by pragmatic cant.

Atone, further, that between myself and His green world
Cataracting walls obscure bright earth from me,
Separate you from me, and Him, and cleave from the furled
Banner of my former self, my very atonement on this Day.

DACHINE RAINER's piece on "To Be a Jew" appeared in our number of June 1957. Her verse has been published in many of the literary magazines, as well as in COMMENTARY.

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THE STUDY OF MAN

WOODROW WILSON: TRAGIC HERO

His Flaw and His Achievement

ROBERT LANGBAUM

IT IS a sign of Woodrow Wilson's greatness that he has remained, since his death in 1924, both a living issue in American politics and a living figure in the American consciousness. We can almost define American foreign policy between the two world wars as a reaction against and a qualified return to Wilsonian idealism. After the relapse into isolationism, we were slowly forced back to the realization that as Wilson had warned, we could stay out of European affairs only at our peril. And when we did enter World War II, it was again in order to "end war" and "make the world safe for democracy."

By the time of World War II just about every one—most Republicans at home and most of democratic opinion abroad—had been converted to Wilson's program. Roosevelt did not, like Wilson, have to fight the Republicans for the Atlantic Charter or the San Francisco Peace Treaty. Nor did he, like Wilson, have to persuade the British and French not to use the victory for colonial or economic aggrandizement. Even reparations—the issue on which Wilson had been routed by the other Allies—were managed this time with such care that Germany, Italy, and Japan have come out of World War II more prosperous than when they went into it. If we leave out of account the Soviet side of the peace settlement, we can say that we have had this time something like a Wilsonian "peace without victory."

ROBERT LANGBAUM, who teaches English at Cornell University, offers a fresh evaluation of Woodrow Wilson, based on a body of recent historical research. Mr. Langbaum, the author of *The Poetry of Experience* (1957), has contributed essays on a variety of subjects.

But if we went into the last war to finish Wilson's job, we were also determined to avoid his mistakes. Thus Roosevelt made sure, as Wilson had not, to secure in advance bipartisan commitment to the peace settlement. The Allies demanded unconditional surrender of Germany and Japan so that they could not complain, as Germany did after Versailles when she said she had been tricked into surrendering by Wilson's Fourteen Points. And if at Yalta the Big Three agreed to organize the United Nations, they also made alternate arrangements based on power and an almost frank recognition of *de facto* spheres of influence. "That Roosevelt ever had deep faith in the United Nations as an agency of world peace is doubtful," says Richard Hofstadter in *The American Political Tradition* (1948). "His original and spontaneous reaction was to seek for peace and stability not through a general concert of all the nations but rather through a four-power establishment of the United States, Great Britain, Russia, and China, which was to police the world." This was to take Clemenceau's line against Wilson.

A changed attitude to power defines the difference between Wilson's America and Roosevelt's. Wilson would have liked the nations to start by surrendering their power to the League, to allow the League to make the peace by settling all questions on the basis of pure justice. But we have learned the lesson Clemenceau tried to drive through Wilson's head when he insisted that France needed protection while the League was evolving, that power cannot be surrendered to a vacuum. We have also learned that there are, as George F. Kennan has pointed out, few international disputes which even an impartial authority could settle on a basis of pure justice (think of Cyprus and

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Palestine), that power and justice are inextricable.

We learned these lessons because, with the decline of British power, we had to take over. But it was also easier to learn them in 1945 than in 1919 because we had easier consciences about World War II than about World War I. Wilson was reluctant to enter the war because he could see no clear line of right on either side; and once (for reasons which are still obscure) we did get in, he did all he could to purify the war, to turn an old-fashioned imperialistic war into an ideological war. But he did this singlehandedly, without much regard for Britain and France or for the secret treaties in which the Allies had arranged to divide up enemy territories. Wilson went to Paris prepared to do battle for his own personal "just" peace against the "selfish" designs of countries he never was willing to call our *allies* but only our *associates*. They and we had not fought the same war.

World War II seemed by contrast a model of ideological clarity—fascism versus democracy, aggressors versus victims—and our own motives for entering were rendered unequivocal by the attack on Pearl Harbor. Roosevelt therefore saw no conflict between power and ideals. Power had been in the wrong hands, it was now in the right hands. The question was to keep it there for the right ends. The four-power establishment he envisioned at Yalta has, since the break with Russia, evolved into NATO, which operates as an effective international community within the still nominal world community.

SINCE World War II we have realized many of Wilson's ideals. Never before have we been so active in world affairs, never before have we done so much for other countries. Yet we are faced with the curious paradox that we seem less idealistic now than in Wilson's day—to the world and to ourselves as well. Although we have helped to bring many new nations into being since the last war, we have been forced by our responsibility for world order to qualify our support of the Wilsonian principle of self-determination. The result is that Russia, which profits by disorder, can pose as the unqualified champion of self-determination; while India, which plays the neutral role in world affairs we used to play, enjoys the kind of moral prestige we used to enjoy. Wilsonian idealism seems to have passed from our hands. We no longer feel in touch with the revolutionary side of things, and the realization that this is so comes as a shock to a country used to thinking of itself as revolutionary.

The realization may account for the general air of moral discouragement at a time when America has reached a peak of power and prosperity. It accounts, I think, for the double attitude toward Woodrow Wilson to be found in the latest books on him. If we take a representative sampling* of the many books on Wilson which have appeared since 1956, the centenary year of his birth, we find them largely critical of the blindness, the obstinacy, even the hypocrisy of Wilson's idealism. But we also gather that the worst of the reaction against Wilson is over. We find a respect for the moral intensity, the self-consistency, the grand style of Wilson's life and rhetoric, for the kind of public figure who at the height of his popularity prepared himself for the day when he would have to stand alone against everybody for what he believed to be right. Wilson begins to emerge as an admonitory figure, a reminder of lost moral grandeur, of the price we have paid for our new realism, maturity, and responsibility. But since the emphasis is on Wilson's final failure and the reasons for it, he emerges as what we can in the strictest sense call a *tragic* figure—as at once a model of our American virtues and a terrible example of what can happen when our virtues collide with reality.

These books contain many surprises for the reader who, having made no special study of Wilson's life, thinks of him as simply a great liberal idealist who failed because he was ahead of his time. They remind us that Wilson's idealism was not unalloyed with a great deal of personal ambition and a considerable capacity for political maneuver; that he had substantially less interest in minorities (Irish, Jews, Negroes) and labor unions than liberals do nowadays; that he sent troops into Mexico;

*John Morton Blum, *Woodrow Wilson and the Politics of Morality* (Little, Brown, 215 pp., $3.50); Alexander L. and Juliette L. George, *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House: A Personality Study* (John Day, 362 pp., $6.00); Herbert Hoover, *The Ordeal of Woodrow Wilson* (McGraw-Hill, 318 pp., $6.00); Arthur S. Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom* (Princeton University Press, 504 pp., $7.50); Arthur Walworth, *Woodrow Wilson, American Prophet* and *World Prophet* (Longmans, Green, 2 Vols., 439 pp., 436 pp., $15.00).

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that pacifists and German-Americans were treated harshly under his wartime administration; that the notorious Red-baiting Palmer raids were conducted by his Attorney-General. Indeed, the dominant line of scholarly opinion seems to be that, far from being ahead of his time, Wilson failed because he tried to apply 19th-century ideas and ideals to 20th-century realities.

Most shocking of all to the non-specialist is the judgment in almost all these books that Wilson himself was finally responsible for the defeat of the League in the Senate. Wilson's enemy, Republican Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, did everything he could to engineer the defeat. But as Lodge himself boasted, he could not have managed it without Wilson's help. When Wilson came back from Paris, public opinion was overwhelmingly in favor of the League and the Senate was ready to ratify the Treaty. Lodge's strategy therefore was to defeat the Treaty not, as he put it, "by direct frontal attack but by the indirect method" of attaching reservations to the resolution of ratification. On the face of it, all Lodge wanted was to reserve explicitly certain national rights which Wilson felt were already implicitly reserved in the League Covenant—the right to withdraw from the League, the exclusion of domestic questions from League jurisdiction, the validity of the Monroe Doctrine, and most important the exclusive right of Congress to order the use of American military and economic resources for punishment of aggressors. Wilson was willing to make these reservations explicit in four interpretations of the Covenant. But he would not have these interpretations written into the resolution of ratification, for this, he argued, would open the Treaty to further amendment by all the signatory nations. The French and British, however, urged Wilson to accept the reservations, and scholars generally agree that the reservations would not have had any practical effect on our participation in the League.

If we remember that it was not the machinery of the United Nations but Truman's bold and decisive use of the machinery that made the Korean action possible, we realize that the Lodge reservations would not have made the League technically any weaker than it already was. The strength of the League, like that of the United Nations, ultimately depended on the strength and determination with which the great powers used its machinery to enforce peace. If the League failed to stop the aggressions of Japan, Italy, and Germany (countries which, before they united, were so much less powerful than Russia is today), it was only because Britain and France were not strong and determined enough to do so. Since American isolation was largely responsible for their lack of strength and determination, we must conclude that the fight over the Lodge reservations was a catastrophic quibble and that Wilson was indeed Lodge's principal ally in killing the Treaty.

Republican Senator Watson expressed to Lodge the fear that Wilson might after all accept his reservations, "Then we are in the League, and once in, our reservations become purely fiction." "But my dear James," Lodge smiled, "you do not take into consideration the hatred that Woodrow Wilson has for me personally. Never under any set of circumstances in this world could he be induced to accept a treaty with Lodge reservations appended to it." Watson claims in his memoirs that when he told Wilson that the only way the United States could join the League would be by accepting the Lodge reservations, Wilson retorted in a fury, "The *Lodge* reservations! Never! Never! I'll never consent to any policy with which that impossible name is so prominently identified."

Had Wilson allowed his own interpretations of the League Covenant to be written into the resolution of ratification, he could have patched up an alliance with the "mild reservationist" Republicans and probably defeated Lodge. But instead of negotiating with Senators to secure Senate ratification of the Treaty, he decided to take his case to the country, and against every one's advice embarked on the disastrous Western tour which ended at Pueblo, Colorado, with the stroke that finally incapacitated him. When Wilson returned, paralyzed, from Pueblo, it was the Treaty with Lodge's reservations which came up for ratification in the Senate.

As the day for the vote approached, Wilson's closest friends broke into the sickroom to urge concessions, but he remained adamant. And so on November 19, 1919, the Treaty was defeated. All through December and January frantic attempts were made to reach a compromise, but Wilson was immovable. He proposed a "solemn referendum" on the issue in the Presidential election of 1920. He even challenged the fifty Senators who had opposed

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him to resign and seek re-election on the Treaty issue; if a majority of them were re-elected, Wilson promised that *he* would resign. To the French Ambassador who urged concessions, he said, "I shall consent to nothing, the Senate must take its medicine."

When on March 19, 1920, the Treaty came up again for the last time, twenty-one Democrats bolted and voted with the Republican reservationists for the Treaty as amended. This made a majority but not the necessary two-thirds. It is ironic to think that if seven more Democrats had been disloyal to Wilson the United States would have joined the League. After the vote, one of Lodge's allies in the Senate said to him, "We can always depend on Mr. Wilson. He never has failed us."

TO ASK why Wilson acted as he did, why he was so obstinate, why he made the Western tour instead of negotiating the Treaty through the Senate, is to raise all the fundamental questions about him. After all the heartbreaking compromises at Paris, was it not more than he could bear to submit to another round of compromises at home? Was he not defending against Senatorial encroachment the Constitutional right of the President to conduct foreign affairs? The son and grandson of Presbyterian ministers, Wilson saw himself, as Arthur Walworth suggests in his two-volume *Woodrow Wilson: American Prophet* and *World Prophet* (1958), as a kind of secular prophet appointed to express the "will of the people," not only of the American people but of all people. At Paris he fought for the people of Europe against their leaders, and at home he fought for the American people against Senators who "do not know what the people are thinking. They are as far from the people, the great mass of the people, as I am from Mars." Earlier in his career he had held out obstinately for what he felt to be right and had won. Had he not every reason to believe he could win again this time?

Critics of Wilson, however, see him as either befogged by his democratic mysticism, or else as rationalizing a desire for power by identifying his own will with that of the people. In *Woodrow Wilson and the Politics of Morality* (1956), John Morton Blum blames Wilson's failure on an uncompromising Protestant and liberal moralism which made him incapable of dealing with people or the realities of 20th-century politics. "He was at once the keeper of a rigid conscience and the creature of a political system that worked only when he bent that conscience to conform to the narrow set of public tolerances." "Wilson's was a nineteenth-century intelligence, obsolescing at a rapid rate."

This is the dominant line of criticism. Richard Hofstadter *(American Political Tradition)* sums up Wilson's career this way: "Just as the New Freedom had been, under the idealistic form of a crusade for the rights and opportunities of the small man, an effort to restore the archaic conditions of nineteenth-century competition, so the treaty and the League Covenant were an attempt, in the language of democracy, peace, and self-determination, to retain the competitive national state system of the nineteenth century without removing the admitted source of its rivalries and animosities. It had always been Wilson's aim to preserve the essentials of the *status quo* by reforming it; but failing essentially to reform, he was unable to preserve."

The only trouble with this line of criticism is that it can be said of all people that they derive their morality from the past and that their vision into the future has its limits. It was after all as an innovator that Wilson was remarkable—as President of Princeton, as Governor of New Jersey, as President of the United States, as world leader. Is not the aim of reform (as distinct from revolution) to make the established system work, and are we not still interested in the small businessman and farmer?

Wilson's moralism was undoubtedly his weakness, but it was also his main strength. He understood, before other non-revolutionary statesmen, the importance of ideology as a weapon in 20th-century warfare and the potency of the appeal to foreign peoples over the heads of their governments. The Fourteen Points were promulgated as a hard-headed instrument of war—to meet the Bolshevik charge that the war was imperialistic and that Russia should therefore withdraw and the common soldiers on both sides lay down their arms. At Paris he made the world give official recognition to forces which have turned out to be dominant forces of our time—the nationalism of colonial peoples and the desire for an international order.

To the dominant line of criticism, that Wilson's moralism was outdated, we must add another subsidiary line, that Wilson's moralism concealed a psychological flaw. In *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House: A Personality Study* (1956), Alexander and Juliette George

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make much of Wilson's exaggerated desire, recognized to some degree by all his biographers, to excel and dominate. He felt guilty about this desire, they suggest, because it was unconsciously a desire to defeat his father. Hence the emphasis on altruistic service, to rationalize his desire for power. Hence his hatred of power and "selfish" motives. Wilson's moralism caused his failure in situations which touched off his unconscious motives to the point where he could no longer control them.

The League fight was such a situation. First, because it presented to a man bent on greater and greater achievement the chance to reform the whole world, to change the rest of history; so that Wilson had to win. Second, because in the fight with the Senate, there was Lodge who, having challenged him personally, touched off an unconscious recollection of his father; so that Lodge had to be defeated.

In fighting for the League, Wilson lost out abroad and at home because he made the League idea—an idea he had learned from others, chiefly from Republicans—so belligerently his own. Seeing his personal involvement, the other negotiators at Paris made him grant concessions to secure their agreement to a project they had either subscribed to already or else didn't care about; while at home it was largely Wilson's League that Lodge and his friends opposed. In their psychoanalysis of the Senate fight, the Georges are hard on Wilson. It was because he knew deep down that he was jeopardizing the League for those "selfish" motives he so deplored that he became more and more obstinate and—suicidal. The Western tour, undertaken against the advice of his doctor, was thus an attempt to secure self-purification through martyrdom. "Even though in my condition, it might mean the giving up of my life, I will gladly make the sacrifice to save the Treaty." On the tour he protested, "If I felt that I personally in any way stood in the way of this settlement, I would be glad to die that it might be consummated." And again, "I thank God that on this occasion the whole issue has nothing to do with me."

Such an interpretation is perhaps too schematic to be entirely convincing. But we don't have to go along with the Freudian technicalities to find in it a generally valid portrait of a man who failed because he wanted too much. Most of the books on Wilson discern roughly the same pattern of failure in his life. The pattern takes its main shape from the correspondence which everyone finds between Wilson's career as president of Princeton and his career as President of the United States. As president of Princeton, Wilson started by sweeping all before him, gaining for the presidency unprecedented power and making drastic changes in curriculum and departmental organization. This period corresponds to his amazingly successful first term in Washington during which he put through the whole New Freedom program. But as in Washington, the people at Princeton whom he ignored or offended gathered into an opposition and there soon appeared as leader of the opposition Andrew Fleming West, the man who played the role which was, as everyone agrees, later to be played by Lodge.

This role was, according to the Georges, that of "father image"; it was, according to John Morton Blum, that of "satanic figure" in Wilson's black-and-white moral system. As with Lodge, the controversy with West became bitterly personal. It was over the location of a graduate school of which West was to be dean. West, who wanted an autonomous empire, wanted the school built three miles off campus. Wilson, who wanted to keep control, wanted it on campus. West was like Lodge a brilliant aristocratic foe who fought deviously. He obtained for the graduate school a half-million dollar donation which stipulated that the school be built according to his plan. This gave Wilson the chance to moralize the issue as democracy versus money and privilege.

Wilson could have defeated West had he known when to stop. He was about to have his way when he declared that the controversy was not over a site at all but over aristocratic versus democratic ideals of education. And though West had stayed on at Princeton only because Wilson had promised him the graduate school, Wilson now insisted on West's resignation as dean. When this shocked even Wilson's friends and, together with the loss of the half-million, stiffened the opposition against him, Wilson laid the issue before the American people in a speech which made headlines across the country. The publicity cost him so much support at Princeton that when a friend of West's died and left several millions for a graduate school, naming West as executor, Wilson made a complete retreat, invited a renewal of the original half-million donation, and prepared to resign. With his own hands he destroyed his career at

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Princeton. But his ability to capture headlines called him to the attention of certain Democratic leaders, and there were those who said he had exploited the graduate school controversy for just that purpose.

With the large pattern established, we see the rest of Wilson's life as conforming to it. The years as Governor of New Jersey belong to the upward swing which culminated in the first term in Washington. During these years, we see Wilson dealing masterfully with men and events; it is after he has achieved all he set out for that his energies turn self-destructive. "It is necessary," say the Georges, "to distinguish Wilson the power-seeker from Wilson the power-holder." "Success does not appease him," says his authorized biographer, Ray Stannard Baker (*Woodrow Wilson: Life and Letters*, 1927), "it only scourges him to harder effort and during the latter part of his course at Hopkins, with triumph on every hand, he is constantly driving himself beyond his strength, he has 'ominous headaches.'" In his first years at Princeton, Mr. Blum tells us, Wilson "exercised extraordinary talents of persuasion. . . . But in his later years, taxing his environment beyond its immediate tolerances, he permitted his temperament to dull his discernment of men and situations. . . . He had lived in microcosm there the pattern that would characterize his public career."

"The Princeton period," says Arthur S. Link (*Wilson: The Road to the White House*, 1947), "was the microcosm of a later macrocosm. . . . His refusal to compromise in the graduate college controversy was almost Princeton's undoing; his refusal to compromise in the fight in the Senate over the League of Nations was the nation's undoing. Both controversies assume the character and proportion of a Greek tragedy." Both taken together do. For it is the pattern of adumbration and fulfillment, together with the pattern of rise and fall, which give to Wilson's career its tragic curve.

Speaking of Wilson's "passionate pride," the literary critic, Edmund Wilson, plots this curve in reviewing Baker's biography in 1927. "As President of the United States, he repeated after the War his whole tragedy as president of Princeton. . . . It is possible to observe in certain lives, where conspicuously superior abilities are united with serious deficiencies, not the progress in a career or vocation that carries the talented man to a solid position or a definite goal, but a curve plotted over and over again and always dropping from some flight of achievement to a steep descent into failure." The tragic hero is, according to the classical prescriptions, a good man of superior abilities who fails because of a flaw which is both the sign of, and the price he pays for, his superiority. This flaw is the tragic flaw of pride which he demonstrates by committing the tragic sin of overreaching.

WILSON as tragic hero—that view of him emerges from the essentially literary pattern into which so many of these non-literary studies seem naturally to fall. The tragic view of Wilson has this advantage, that you can absorb into it both Mr. Blum's moralistic and the Georges' psychological interpretations. You can also believe that Wilson's failure was caused both by historical conditions and his own character, that fate was, to use the language of tragedy, both external and internal. For tragedy is all at once about character, morality, and politics, about spirit in the world and in the individual. It is because the story of Wilson's failure has all these kinds of significance that it falls so naturally into tragic shape.

But most important is the public significance of Wilson's failure. It is significant not only because of its effect on history but also because Wilson carried our characteristically American virtues to that verge where they collide with reality. His mystical appeal to the "will of the people," his desperate need to separate righteousness from power and self-interest, stem from an ideology in which government rests on the consent of the governed and any coercion smacks of illegitimacy. It also stems from our wealth and fortunate geographical position, which has given us the idea that in international affairs we, unlike other nations, have no selfish interests. It stems from the essential American idea which, shaping our characters as well as our politics, has been the source of our greatness and our foolishness—the idea that our fate is not to be like that of other nations, that having started anew on a new continent we will avoid their mistakes and sins. If we remember that tragedy is not about vice but about virtue, we see that Wilson's story could, if it were adequately imagined by some master playwright or novelist, make the representative tragedy of American idealism.

In trying to define the quintessential American as opposed to the European Idea, Lionel

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Trilling says that the European sees the world as inhospitable to spirit and concludes that man must place the highest value on whatever good he can find or create in it. The American instead sees the world as continuous with spirit. "For the American consciousness the world is the natural field for the spirit, laid out to be just that, as a baseball diamond or a tennis court is laid out for a particular kind of activity." The result is that the American devaluates material things and in the end life itself more than the European. For with the American it is all or nothing. He cannot tolerate anything which remains resistant to spiritualization, for he has not like the European started by breaking his heart "on the idea of the hardness of the world." Thus, we might add, the American isolationist shuns depraved Europe's endless squabbles, the American intellectual disdains mere sordid politics, and Wilson, in order to be the exceptional "professor in politics," had to transform politics into a spiritual activity.

Trilling's contrast is beautifully illustrated by Lloyd George's description, in his *Memoirs of the Peace Conference,* of Clemenceau opening "his great eyes in twinkling wonder" over the "idealistic President" who must really have "regarded himself as a missionary whose function it was to rescue the poor European heathen from their age-long worship of false and fiery gods." Wilson's "most extraordinary outburst was when he was developing some theme—I rather think it was connected with the League of Nations—which led him to explain the failure of Christianity to achieve its highest ideals. 'Why,' he said, 'has Jesus Christ so far not succeeded in inducing the world to follow His teaching in these matters? It is because He taught the ideal without devising any practical means of attaining it. That is the reason why I am proposing a practical scheme to carry out His aims.' Clemenceau slowly opened his dark eyes to their widest dimensions and swept them round the Assembly to see how the Christians gathered around the table enjoyed this exposure of the futility of their Master."

The passage reads like a Henry James story about American innocence versus European experience. It is significant that the Georges quote the passage in order to criticize Wilson but that Herbert Hoover, whose *Ordeal of Woodrow Wilson* (1958) reads after the other books like a throwback to the Wilsonian frame of mind, quotes parts of the same passage as evidence of European ingratitude and cynicism. The difference is a measure of our increased "Europeanization," for the other authors sympathize on the whole with the Europeans and with the worldly, compromising Colonel House (I found myself relishing even Lodge and West) as against Wilson when he is being unworldly and uncompromising.

THE difference makes possible the tragic view of Wilson. For Wilson figured as a martyr to those who believed in his ideals uncritically. He becomes a tragic hero when we recognize his ideals as still ours but as conflicting with reality—when we come to understand that a man or nation might do good for selfish motives and might by abdicating power or adhering inopportunely to the letter of the law destroy the world. Wilson's is the tragedy of a man who could not face such ambivalence, and it offers a sobering lesson to a nation emerging not only from physical and political but also from spiritual isolation. We can no longer separate our destiny from that of other nations, or suppose that we can exercise paramount influence without also exercising paramount power, without taking our moral chances and like everyone else dipping our hands in the world's mixture of good and evil.

But Wilson's tragedy offers an even more important lesson—that, after everything has been said, Wilson was in the longest run right about everything. Great men are usually attacked for not having that just proportion of moderate virtues which would make them little men. Without his imbalance and blind spots, Wilson would not have had the moral energy to set so many forces in motion. He was certainly right in seeing that politics had in the long run to be transcended, that new institutions would not be enough without a change in our whole view of international relations. He was right in refusing to give in to reality, for only in that way have men changed reality.

We respond to tragedy with awe, with a combination of reverence and fear—reverence in this case for the fire and inner truth of Wilson's ideals, fear for the inevitable clash of such ideals with an alien reality. The tragic lesson is always twofold. We have to learn all the little "realistic" truths to appreciate in the end the big truth in Wilson's remark soon before he died: "The world is *run* by ideals. Only the fool thinks otherwise."

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Hero of Kovno

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . No one can deny that the stories of the Jewish Ghetto leaders presented by Philip Friedman ("Two 'Saviors' Who Failed," December 1958) and earlier by Solomon Bloom ("Dictator of the Lodz Ghetto," February 1949) make vivid reading. However, from the historical point of view this selection of personalities appears too one-sided, tending to create a distorted picture in the eyes of the general reader. . . .

Allow me to present on the other side one of those Jewish leaders who was selected by autonomous processes of community organization rather than by outside (German) authorities, a man of high moral stature and deep sense of historical responsibility—Dr. Elchanan Elkes, Chairman of the Ghetto Council of Kovno. . . .

Dr. Elkes was selected at a meeting held in July 1941. About fifty Jewish civic leaders gathered for this tragic "civil function." One of the participants has described it in his memoirs (*Last Extermination*, by Jacob Goldberg, Munich, 1948):

"When the proposal was put forward to elect Dr. Elkes president of the Ghetto Council, he declined. . . . Then Rabbi Schmukler . . . arose and delivered a speech. . . . It was a tragic speech, delivered by a fervent Jew at a moment of fateful responsibility. He cried out: 'The Germans say they need an *Oberjude*, but for all of us Dr. Elkes will be the *Rosh-Hakahal* in the greatest sense of Jewish tradition, and when the time comes it will be he who will lead us to Eretz Yisroel.'

"Rabbi Schmukler's speech left a powerful impression . . . after it no other candidate could even be considered. Deeply moved, Dr. Elkes said no more."

It goes without saying that Dr. Elkes was not able to stem the avalanche of Nazi extermination or to change the historic fate of the Kovno Jewish community. The history of the Kovno ghetto was as full of suffering and blood, of heroism and treachery, as the history of other ghettos. However, from the day of his election until his voluntary death at Dachau he carried the burden of his position with noble dignity and moral responsibility.

In my humble opinion it behooves us, above all, to preserve for generations to come the noble images of men like Elkes. . . .

Samuel Gringauz

New York City

Norfolk's Jews and Integration

To the Editor of Commentary:

I read with interest Murray Friedman's accurate portrayal of "Virginia Jewry in the School Crisis" (January). However, I would like to add some observations from Norfolk, Virginia, and to point out that the dilemma here is not limited to Jews but extends to all liberals.

On September 24, 1958, the following resolution was presented for adoption by the Norfolk Junior Chamber of Commerce: "That, we, the members of the Norfolk Junior Chamber of Commerce, believe that public education is vital for the preservation of civic and religious liberty in the United States of America. Therefore, not as segregationists or integrationists, but as realistic public spirited citizens who wish to maintain public schools, we resolve to give public support to every effort to keep public schools open by every legal and honorable means."

At this meeting, the resolution was adopted by a small majority. Thereafter, immediate steps were taken to rescind the resolution at the next regular membership meeting on October 8. Both the opponents and the proponents of the resolution contacted every member and solicited his support. Only half the membership attended the October 8 meeting, although the issue was serious; the original motion was rescinded. There was little discussion, since neither side could be persuaded by words. The defeat was due in some part to these factors: (1) the organization relies upon the public for support and the members feared a loss of this support if a stand were taken. In fact, a scheduled civic show was dropped when exhibitors learned of the original stand favoring public education and canceled their contracts to exhibit; (2) the organization relies upon the

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local government's support and the local government was opposed to the original position taken by the organization; (3) several influential members threatened to resign if the original motion was not rescinded.

In discussing the school situation with a leading figure in the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce, I was told that bankers and other prominent businessmen simply refused to take any public position for fear of loss of business. Whatever side they favored would alienate a large segment of the community. That the lack of any high school public education would in itself be detrimental to the community could not move them to make a public pronouncement. The problem has progressed to the point where there is no middle ground; you must be for segregation; if not, you are automatically for integration.

The Norfolk City Council has cut off all funds for public education beyond the 6th grade level effective February 1. Now there will be 17,000 children without any public schools where there were 10,000 before. Many people would rather abolish all forms of public education before permitting any integration.

With this background in mind, is there any question why the Norfolk Jewish Community Council voted overwhelmingly not to take any public stand on the issue? Could it have done otherwise? There is no doubt in my mind that any public stand by the Jewish community as such will stimulate anti-Semitism. It is indeed a sad state of affairs, but this is the true situation. The future is dim.

WILLIAM MAZEL

Norfolk, Virginia

Suburban Ghetto?

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have belatedly read Alan Wood's "I Sell My House" (November 1958). "To tell/or not to tell" really does not seem to require an apparatus consisting of, potentially, two rabbis, the Ethical Culture Society, and the Ministers' Board. Any old-fashioned, non-introspective person could have found the answer for himself in two minutes flat. . . .

Obviously, Mr. Wood was aware immediately, just as the reader is, that the high concentration of Jews in the area would be of interest to the Wilsons. He felt, however, that volunteering this information might result in inconvenience to himself. . . . In law, he was under no compulsion to make such a voluntary declaration; as his friend quoted to him appropriately: *caveat emptor*. For people who want to protect their self-interests, it should be sufficient to know that they are not misrepresenting, defrauding, cheating, or committing any other heinous offense.

But Mr. Wood wants to eat his cake and have it too—he wants to feel completely virtuous, although he is not ready to make what is, after all, a very slight sacrifice (the article makes it appear that the possibility of pecuniary loss is more illusory than real). He is searching frantically for somebody willing to pronounce the magic words: *te absolvo*. . . . If I remember correctly, every Jew has a large area of elbow-room even in religious matters, i.e., in certain areas he can make Halachah for himself. Moreover, once he is over thirteen, he makes his own moral choices and is responsible for them only to his Creator. No rabbi, no minister, no tribunal can fumigate his actions and cleanse him, if fumigation or cleansing is what he needs. . . .

Mr. Wood's article . . . appears to be typical of a genre that finds its way not infrequently into the pages of COMMENTARY. That is to say, it makes a mountain out of a molehill. It deals with situations which involve protracted soul-searching and mental torment, but which the generations of our parents or our grandparents would have disposed of without flagellation and with promptness; partly because they were too busy with weightier matters . . . and partly because they were rooted in a tradition, Jewish, German, French, etc., which prefabricated the foundation, at least, for many decisions, so that they had to add only the superstructure. . . .

Was Mr. Wood really naive enough to be in doubt about the outcome? Given the choice, wasn't it natural for the Wilsons to pick a residence in a part of Long Island which is not 90-95 per cent Jewish? On the other hand, Mr. Wood may really have been on tenterhooks until the very end. . . .

Hans Morgenthau in the same issue ("The New United Nations") looks at the UN without colored glasses, parabolic mirrors, or other gadgets distorting reality. Just the sober, rational attitude I would recommend to Mr. Wood.

LEO STARCH

Los Angeles, California

MR. WOOD *writes:*

It takes two, in America at least, to make a ghetto. Readers such as Mr. Starch apparently know about some of the Christians who move out. What Mr. Starch may fail to realize, however, is that he offers scant inducement for other non-Jews to take their place when he regards it a foregone conclusion that no Christian would *choose* to live in an attractive, modern community, which was once mixed but is

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now heavily Jewish. This attitude is shared by many in North Shore Community Homes, which may be one of the reasons for its unbalanced composition. Happily, not all NSC'ers feel so cynical. Some of my former neighbors who read the article told me how friendly they and their children are with the Christians still living in the community, and how they deplored the fact that the Wilsons had not bought our house.

Algeria—Two Views

To the Editor of Commentary:

It is easy to understand Maurice Carr's sympathy with Charles de Gaulle's effort to find a way out of the Algerian war ("Algeria After the Referendum," December 1958). But I do not think that an Algerian solution is in any way aided by the propagation of misinformation on essential aspects of the question. And Mr. Carr's article, unfortunately, is a mine of such misinformation. However, I must necessarily confine myself to pointing out but a few of his most important errors. Mr. Carr says: "Until the end of the First World War Algerian nationalism was virtually non-existent." Actually, Algerians united under the Emir Abd-el-Kader to resist France's invasion so effectively that the conquest of the country took the French seventeen years of warfare, carried out by means of ruthless massacres of Algerian civilians and punctuated by a series of French defeats, followed by treaties which the French broke as soon as it suited their convenience. Thereafter, there were bloody uprisings followed by much bloodier repressions at five- to ten-year intervals throughout the 19th century. (Nor were similar events unknown in the present century, prior to the FLN. In 1945, a number of Frenchmen were killed at Setif; several thousand Arabs died in reprisal.) Mr. Carr says: "Yet the communities coexisted quietly enough for more than a century under the old colonial system, which was not unduly harsh." Actually, the "not unduly harsh" colonial system involved a series of confiscations which robbed the Algerian Moslems of all the best land in their country for the benefit of the European colonists, whose serfs they in effect became. At the same time, the European colonists of Algeria became the most dependable clientele of French anti-Semitism. (This was the basis for their overwhelming support of the Pétain regime.) European expropriation and massacre of the Moslems and agitation and discrimination against the Jews are not, I think, properly to be described by the phrase "the communities coexisted quietly enough."

Mr. Carr attempts to show that the Moslems have received substantial economic benefits from the French occupation, and cites population statistics as proof of a rising standard of living. But in fact the population explosion which has resulted from the impact of certain modern technical advances—and which has been paralleled in underdeveloped countries which have *not* had the benefit of foreign occupation—does not indicate a rising standard of living. Quite the contrary. As Gunnar Myrdal points out: "The recent explosive development of medical science, making the prevention of death even at exceedingly low standards of living a rather easy and inexpensive matter, has tended to weaken the population checks and thus has moved the stagnation equilibrium to a much more depressed level of human misery." The actual decline in the standard of living of most Algerian Arabs is shown by the fact, cited by André Philip, that there has been a steady decline in the per capita production of grain during the period of French rule. In part, this reflects the rise in population; in part it is due to the diversion of land from grain to wine grapes. Wine is more profitable than bread to the European landowner; the Moslem peasant would still be forbidden by his religion to drink it even if he could afford to buy it. The real meaning of the growth of Algeria's population is to be sought in the unemployment statistics. Approximately half of the Moslem population are permanently or seasonally employed; another fifth of the adult males find work in France, where they live for years on end, separated from their families and in conditions of utter squalor. It is the earnings of these sub-proletarians which support the Algerian Moslem economy on its subsistence level. (Incidentally, Mr. Carr need not worry that "France, to make room for the refugees from Algeria . . . would repatriate the 400,000 Moslems whose earnings keep 2,000,000 relatives in Algeria alive today." One may be sure that the *colons*, even if repatriated, would neither replace the Algerians as the coolie labor of the French economy nor move into the slums and *bidonvilles* in which the Algerian workers are housed.)

Mr. Carr makes a great deal of the results of the constitutional referendum in Algeria to prove that the people do not support the National Liberation Front. Although Tennyson said that simple faith is more than Norman blood, it seems to me that there is such a thing as overdoing it. I wonder whether Mr. Carr really believes that the even more overwhelming election victory which Kadar has just won in Hungary proves that the people of that country repudiate the freedom fighters of 1956. Yet Kadar did not even have to round the

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voters up and transport them to the polls in military trucks, as the French Army did in Algeria. The touching scenes described by Mr. Carr of Moslems demanding the right to vote, although their names had been left off the registers by accident, indicate only that they had good reason to fear the consequences of not being able to prove that they had voted. Yet there was one aspect of the referendum which *did* have significance—the almost total abstention of the Algerian workers in France, who were not directly in front of the guns of the paratroopers.

But perhaps the most serious departure from fact in Mr. Carr's article is his misrepresentation of the character of the FLN. By the use of phony quotation marks, he attributes to it doctrines which are in major respects almost the exact opposite of those it actually holds. Far from urging a single Arab empire, expanding from the present Arab lands to conquer Asia and Africa, the FLN advocates a Maghrebian federation of Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco. Nor does it propose to expel Europeans; rather, it offers them the right to remain—but not as rulers or possessors of special privileges. And politically, it is allied in a joint committee with Habib Bourguiba's Neo-Destour and the Moroccan Istiqlal; one would never guess it from Mr. Carr's article, but Bourguiba has consistently supported the FLN as against the Algerian National Movement of Messali Hadj, and the FLN has designated Tunisia to speak for it in the United Nations.

MAURICE J. GOLDBLOOM

Brooklyn, N.Y.

MR. CARR *writes:*

1. On the subject of Algerian nationalism, I would refer Mr. Goldbloom to a public statement which Ferhat Abbas made some years before he became head of the "Free Algerian Government": "I have spoken with the living, I have even been to the cemeteries to interrogate the dead, but none could furnish any evidence that there has ever existed an Algerian State." *The Encyclopedia Britannica* in its article on Algeria notes that no Algerian nation existed before or after the French conquest. Mr. Goldbloom singularly weakens the case of FLN when he denies the demonstrable truth that "until the end of the First World War Algerian nationalism was virtually non-existent." He would do better to plead that some Algerians now want to constitute themselves into a nation.

2. The rising of Abd-el-Kader was *not* nationalist, but (again I would refer Mr. Goldbloom to the *Britannica*) a religious war of Islam against the "infidel." Abd-el-Kader was a pious Moslem, a man of great culture and ability and a clean and generous warrior. The *Britannica* points out that his ultimate failure was largely due to the refusal of the Kabyles (Berber mountain tribes whose Mohammedanism was not too strongly held) to make common cause with the Arabs against the French. After his defeat Abd-el-Kader declared, "It is the will of Allah!" and became a devoted friend of France. During the Syrian massacres of 1860, Abd-el-Kader saved the lives of many Christians attacked by Moslems in Damascus, where he was then living, and was decorated by Napoleon III with the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor. In 1871, when a revolt broke out in Algeria after France's humiliation in the Franco-Prussian war, Abd-el-Kader appealed to his co-religionists to lay down their arms.

3. Mr. Goldbloom is perpetuating a myth when he alleges that after the surrender of Abd-el-Kader "there were bloody uprisings followed by much bloodier repressions at five- to ten-year intervals throughout." In the course of a century, serious troubles broke out in Algeria on three occasions; but they were no more nationalist than is the present outbreak of dissidence among the Riff tribesmen of Morocco. The Maghreb peoples have a long tradition of hostility to any central authority. Under the French colonial system, which has now outlived its *raison d'être,* Algeria enjoyed what was relatively by far the quietest period in its turbulent history of internecine warfare.

4. Far be it from me to defend the European land speculators who bought up (but did not, as Mr. Goldbloom asserts, confiscate) Moslem farmlands. On the other hand, by draining swamps and providing irrigation, the colonists created much new arable soil, so that on balance the Moslems today own a far greater acreage of productive land than ever before. The production of cereals rose from 19,794 quintals (hundredweights) in 1948-9 to 24,532 quintals in 1954-5 and has steadily increased since, despite the systematic burning down of farms by the guerrilla forces. The Algerian Moslem farm laborers are underpaid and underemployed; but even so their standard of living is incomparably higher than that of the Egyptian *fellahim.* Already one in every six Moslem Algerians is economically, socially, and culturally on a par with the European settlers, and the task which the Gaullist regime has now undertaken—without prejudice to the future political status of Algeria—is simply to emancipate the still backward masses in the shortest possible time. The greater part of Algeria is a natural desert, and the future prosperity of the country lies in industrialization

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and universal education. The colonists may be blamed for many things, but it is to their eternal credit that by the introduction of sanitation they enabled the Moslem population to multiply fivefold. The natives were not massacred; nor were they at any time subject to segregation. Both the Moslem and Christian communities of Algeria have benefited greatly from their past coexistence. Algeria can flourish only if they continue to coexist, no longer after the colonial fashion, but as absolute equals in every way.

5. The Jews, who were locked up in ghettos and oppressed under Turkish rule, welcomed the French as liberators. Naturalized French citizens *en bloc* in 1870, Algerian Jewry emerged from the Dark Ages to a new status of human dignity. That there are anti-Semites and fascists among the European settlers is incontestable. Mr. Goldbloom may have noticed that in my article I vehemently denounced the European *ultras* as fascists. But does Mr. Goldbloom know, or care, that the FLN terrorists have perpetrated anti-Semitic pogroms, and have killed proportionately three times as many Jews as Christians in Algeria?

6. If Mr. Goldbloom had been in Algeria at the time of the referendum, he would have seen for himself—as I did—that the Moslems voted of their own volition. The men did so because they are war-weary and have faith in General de Gaulle's willingness and ability to bring peace with justice to Algeria. The women did so with an added motive: they yearn to free themselves from their millennial slavery. Scores of foreign newspapermen will corroborate that the inhabitants of the Casbah flocked to the polling stations entirely of their own accord, defying the FLN threats of bloody reprisals. The many Moslems who chose to abstain came to no harm at the hands of the French.

7. The FLN draws its inspiration as well as the bulk of its funds from Nasser and his Arab League, which seek to establish a united Arab Empire stretching from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean and from the Mediterranean to the heart of Black Africa. Not all the leaders, and certainly not the rank and file of the FLN, wish to be Nasser's catspaws. Ferhat Abbas, who is according to his lights an Algerian patriot, was anxious to accept General de Gaulle's recent peace offer, but was prevented from doing so under pressure of the Nasserist elements of the FLN. An FLN victory would certainly lead to the immediate departure of virtually all the 1,200,000 Algerians of European origin. Even in moderate Tunisia, 130,000 out of a total of 190,000 Europeans have been forced to leave since the country became independent. Mr. Bourguiba is loathed, but utilized, by the FLN, whose 8,000 well-trained troops hold the whip-hand in Tunisia. The FLN actively sympathizes with Bourguiba's arch-enemy, Salah ben Youssef, who is a refugee in Cairo. The Tunisian president is fortunate to have escaped assassination.

In conclusion, I would like to express the hope that the more liberal, humane elements among the FLN will finally triumph over the pro-Nasser pan-Arab fascists, and will help bring peace with justice to stricken Algeria. Their first duty as Algerians surely should be to help General de Gaulle to educate and emancipate the Algerian masses. When that is done, no force on earth will be able to thwart their legitimate political aspirations. Justice demands that in the ultimate settlement the European minority community in Algeria shall not be persecuted by the Moslem majority any more than that the majority should now be ill-treated by the minority.

Request

To the Editor of Commentary:

I have received a notice from you telling me that my subscription to Commentary will soon expire. When I was in New York three years ago as a *shahaih,* I was able to take out a subscription before I left. Now I am in the unfortunate position of wanting to read Commentary, but as a member of a kibbutz having no budget for a subscription. That is why I wish to ask if any of your readers would be willing to send me his copy after he has read it through. The magazine, after I am done with it, goes into the reading room of the kibbutz and is read by many *chaverim;* so my request is a public one, from a certain point of view. I hope you may be able to do something for us in this respect.

Asher Wallfish

Kibbutz Kfar Hanasi
Doar Na
Galil Elyon, Israel

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

What's In It for Weidman?

THE ENEMY CAMP. By JEROME WEIDMAN. Random House. 561 pp. $4.95.

Reviewed by RAYMOND ROSENTHAL

IN MOST of his novels, at least until *The Enemy Camp,* Jerome Weidman has been the modest, self-effacing bard of New York Jewish life, a rather acidulous and satiric bard at times, yet, like the run of folk writers, one who was at bottom nourished and sustained by the common sentimental sources which he shared with his immediate subjects and audience. I must say that I enjoyed his early novels, much as I enjoy a skillful, unpretentious movie which makes no great effort to extract a "message" from its fast-moving plot. Like such—admittedly rare—movies, Weidman's best effects were obtained by a fascinated devotion to the sheer surface of things. This, one felt, was just the way that a garment center conniver went about getting up in the world, just the way he walked, talked, dressed, wisecracked, and schemed. Weidman's detail was often so startlingly clear that one could almost see the labels on his successful conniver's haberdashery—shoes from French, Shriner & Urner, shirts from Tripler's—which in this particular line of prose endeavor was indeed the highest achievement, almost putting him in a class with John O'Hara and Sinclair Lewis, those panjandrums of the social inventory as a literary form. As for the point to all this fictional outward show, it was somehow beside the point to ask; the show itself, entertainingly skimming the surface, was at once art, moral, and final significance.

But Weidman was far from being a pure reporter of the "facts." For one thing, he was too vividly aware of the appeal exerted by a specific form of Jewish sentimentality, that vague but binding *Gemütlichkeit* created by urban Jews out of the odds and ends of their memories, their childhoods, their precarious, fluid existences in common—what might be called the romance of the hot pastrami sandwich. Just as William Faulkner, a folk bard also, had his whippoorwill-and-magnolia tank from which he could, at need, siphon into his novels great quantities of Old Southern atmosphere, so Jerome Weidman had his reservoir of metropolitan Jewishness which he tapped regularly for turbid and rather mawkish local color. Indeed, properly viewed, Weidman's entire career as a novelist has been based on a shrewd, sharp-eyed exploitation of a whole range of familiar figures—the nice Jewish boy, the possessive Jewish Mama, the cantankerous and obscurely motivated Jewish Grandpa—all qualified and set off by a steady undercurrent of face-saving cynicism; but a strange sort of cynicism, which rather than undermining the sentimentality served somehow to underline it.

Thus, one could read his early novel *What's in It for Me?* either as a brashly realistic account of the rise and fall of an inept swindler, or as a cautionary tale full of the most "proper" and "moral" feelings. Weidman had taken care to include a subplot involving the swindler's old-fashioned and strait-laced Jewish Mama, who regards her son's unscrupulous ambitions with distaste and fear and, as a handy plot-clincher, dies just when disaster overtakes him far from her bedside. The adeptness of all this lay precisely in the fact that Weidman never quite revealed his own hand, but always managed to remain firmly planted behind his camera eye—amused, slightly bitter, aloof, an entertainer whose real views were as hidden as his skin-deep talents were self-evident. One felt, however, that this reticence was most likely all to the good, for if he were to reveal what stood behind that spick-and-span prose, it might well prove to be embarrassing.

Now, with his latest, best-selling novel, *The Enemy Camp,* Mr. Weidman has gone on to produce that long-deferred moment of embarrassment. It is embarrassing, first of all, simply as a literary creation—long-winded, uninspired, patently illogical. But this is a small matter compared to what this book reveals of its author's spiritual and intellectual condition. For

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here we have a writer who, after a quarter of a century devoted to writing about the lives and struggles of American Jews, confesses quite clearly to an abhorrence of his chosen subject. Perhaps under other circumstances this might have produced a sincere and therefore provocative outburst; but, unfortunately, Mr. Weidman's abhorrence is so hedged about and qualified, so camouflaged in the interests of popularity, that he blunts all of its potential passion. He has thought twice and packaged his abhorrence and rage, writing a typical, fake, plodding "problem" novel, in which the usual resounding "liberal" questions are inevitably followed by the usual resounding "liberal" answers. In the process, whatever is spontaneous and real in Mr. Weidman's original impulse is reduced to platitudes.

THE problem he poses, summed up in his aggressive, eye-catching title, is further solemnized by a quotation from Montaigne which stands as an epigraph to the book and reads in part as follows: "Let us not seek our disease outside ourselves, it is within us, it is implanted in our bowels. And the mere fact that we do not perceive ourselves to be sick makes our cure more difficult." And what is this "disease"? It is the frightened clannishness of the Jews, their ingrained distrust and suspicion of all Christians, even those with whom they are most intimately associated. Thus, to Weidman, being a Jew has nothing to do with such matters as history, culture, or religion—"theirs" and ours; it is simply a peculiar psychological disease, caught from the older generation at childhood when the subject is most susceptible, a disease which, moreover, may often erupt in maturity to threaten and destroy an otherwise placid suburban American existence.

George Hurst, a successful accountant living in New York's suburbs and married to a blond, beautiful, bright, "progressive" Bennington girl of Christian origin, suffers from this disease; and it is his happy marriage which is threatened by its sudden recrudescence. Yet George Hurst is perhaps the dullest character in modern literature to have ever been afflicted with the ailment of "Jewishness"; in fact, if he didn't have it he could scarcely be said to exist at all. His ordinariness is to some extent deliberate; but it is also an inevitable consequence of Mr. Weidman's photographic method, which sees everything at dead eye-level and rigorously excludes every intellectual or cultural aspect of his subject. Inevitably, when one starts at this level and then, as Mr. Weidman is doing, tries to probe deeper, to make at least a gesture at analysis, the only path open is down, into the starkest banality.

George Hurst's horror of "the enemy" was hammered into him at childhood by Aunt Tessie, a Lower East Side seamstress who took him out of an orphanage and gave him his "Jewish" upbringing. Aunt Tessie, George informs us, was ugly, "like a tightly rolled black cigar," and so her hostility to the world at large and Christians in particular was simply the defensive reaction of an ugly and frightened person.

Having reached rock bottom, Mr. Weidman can delve no further. He has said all that he has to say on the subject of Jewish identity. But he still has a novel to write, a thesis to expound and clarify. He cannot claim that the super-ordinary George Hurst is a man possessed by the desire to understand himself and his origins; on the contrary, George is a man only interested in being like everybody else, whose deepest worries turn endlessly about the problems of greater comfort. So Weidman invents a melodramatic plot to make up for his hero's patent drabness and lack of intensity. It seems that George has told his Christian wife everything about his past except his love affair with a Lower East Side girl named Dora Dienst. The latter is now married to George's boyhood idol, David Shorr, a typical Weidman hustler, whose name has been changed for practical reasons to Shaw. George's tangled relations with these two characters compose the bulk of the rest of the novel. It is hard to see exactly what they have to do with the thesis, save as the physical representatives of the Lower East Side, which comes to represent for Weidman and his hero all that is twisted, grotesque, and ugly in life, as opposed to free, healthy, uneventful but comfortable existence in the suburbs. In the climactic, obligatory scene, when George Hurst is confronted by his wife with his long-hidden passion for Dora Dienst, who is also a cripple and a whore, he blusters his way out of a tight spot (and his wife's perfectly just accusation) by accusing her of being, like all Christians, an anti-Semite, a member of the Enemy Camp. The Bennington girl is properly shocked, and replies that she never thought of him as a Jew at all but simply as a human being. These calm liberal words magically exorcise George

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Hurst's long-harbored "disease"; he decides from now on to give up both his illicit passion for Dora and his irrational hatred of all Christians, which have by this time, through the sheer force of Weidman's plot exigencies, become inextricably intertwined.

But this is not the last of George Hurst's efforts to plumb the depths of his Jewishness. So far we have traveled through physical ugliness, grotesquerie, twisted sexual passion; there is also a cultural and intellectual matter to be cleared up. It appears that Dora Dienst is a night-club singer, and her singing has a powerfully attractive and deplorable effect on George; indeed, her voice is the very voice of his disease. A waiter at the night club, another Jew, explains it to him: "If that dame was a man, she wouldn't be working in dumps like this for coffee and cake. If that dame was a man she could walk into any synagogue in the world and take over as a cantor. She's got that thing. . . . Like on Yom Kippur, when they hit the *Kol Nidre*." And then Weidman goes on: "Curiously enough, all at once George did know. All at once, after all these years, he knew it so thoroughly that he turned quickly on the bar stool, to see if the people who had been listening so intently were, like Henry Praskin and himself, Jews." Which takes care of both the patriarchs and Al Jolson, and at the same time ties up neatly Weidman's improbable conjunction of Jewishness and sexual passion.

There are many things which can be said about this mishmash, yet I will content myself with making just two simple points. *The Enemy Camp* is not a novel in any real sense. Of course, it is written in the form of a novel, has characters and plot, and even, as I have shown, rather ambitious intellectual pretensions. Yet a novel is first of all an examination of human relationships. Mr. Weidman has ostensibly set out to write a novel about the problems of intermarriage. However, outside of a wisecrack here and there, and the climactic scene I have described, these relations are never really examined. The Christian wife begins and ends as a "progressive" cipher, while it is completely incredible that a man like George Hurst, whose entire life is supposedly dogged by the disease of Jewishness, should have married her in the first place. But this is quite appropriate to the novel's creator, who has, for his own reasons, an uncomfortable relation to his Jewishness, and therefore, paradoxically, a totally conventional relationship to the Christians who, he believes, by being there as "the enemy," give Jewishness its only true reason for existing.

My second point is almost an elegiac one, a backward glance over Mr. Weidman's career. A long time ago he wrote a moving short story entitled, "My Father Sits in the Dark," which summed up the relations between two generations of American Jews. In just a few pages and with an admirable terseness of style, Weidman was able to evoke all the sadness of that older, self-exiled generation of Jews who had left Europe for America but were still bound to the "Old Country" by the after-glow of childhood memories. The poignance of this story was immeasurably heightened by the fact that it was the son who imagines for his inarticulate father that lost European world the father is dreaming about as he sits alone in the dark. I don't wish to make too much of a slight story, yet I feel that it is the absence of just that element of imaginative recreation, that wish to transmute and heighten, which makes *The Enemy Camp* so tawdry a creation.

American Catholicism Today

A CATHOLIC PRIMER ON THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT. By GUSTAVE WEIGEL. S. J. Newman Press (paperback). 79 pp. $.95.

AMERICAN FREEDOM AND CATHOLIC POWER. By PAUL BLANSHARD. Beacon Press (2nd edition). 402 pp. $3.95.

THE EMERGENCE OF LIBERAL CATHOLICISM IN AMERICA. By ROBERT D. CROSS. Harvard University Press. 328 pp. $5.50.

CHRISTIAN THOUGHT AND ACTION; THE ROLE OF CATHOLICISM IN OUR TIME. By DOM AELRED GRAHAM. Harcourt, Brace. 241 pp. $5.00.

PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC. By KENNETH WILSON UNDERWOOD. Beacon Press. 484 pp. $7.50.

Reviewed by WERNER COHN

IN 1938, just after publication of the Pope's famous anti-Nazi encyclical *"Mit Brennender Sorge"* and on the eve of Hitler's invasion of Austria, Freud observed that he was now living under the protection of the Catholic Church—

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that "Catholic Church," he marveled, "which so far has been the implacable enemy of all freedom and thought." Freud was uncomfortable in his gratefulness to the church. Mentioning the Nazi suppression of psychoanalysis, he observed that "such violent methods of suppression are by no means alien to the Catholic Church; she feels it rather as an intrusion into her privileges when other people resort to the same means." He did feel, however, that "the new enemy" (Hitler) was "more dangerous than the old one, with whom we have learned to live in peace."

Such ambivalence toward Catholicism is historically deeply rooted in secularists, in political democrats, in Jews, in non-Catholics generally. Quite aside from the impressive ancient Catholic ritual and worship, all can find something to admire and appreciate in Catholicism; on the other hand, Catholicism is feared because it is felt that it aims at a Church-dominated culture; Catholic theory and practice, so distinctly authoritarian, has more often than not stood in opposition to the democratic traditions of the French and American revolutions. Believing itself to be the only true religion, Catholicism has frequently ridden roughshod over the consciences of others. Beyond all this, there is a certain mystery in the persistence of the Roman Church. It has adapted its ways to those of the modern world, but it has also retained its ancient (or, perhaps more precisely, its medieval) characteristics.

How to come to terms with this phenomenon is a real problem, particularly in America, where Catholicism stands in rather unique relation to the general culture. It is a minority religion here, though it represents the largest single religious communion in the country. Partly in response to its minority position, many of its leading thinkers have made democratic political theory part of their Catholicism (I refer here particularly to men like the Jesuit Father John Courtney Murray); nevertheless, for the most part the Church retains its essentially premodern world-view.

Gustave Weigel belongs to that school of Jesuit priests and scholars who have perhaps gone furthest in trying to adapt Catholicism to modern America; he counsels friendship with democracy and understanding and tolerance for non-Catholics. His monograph is marked not only by close reasoning, but also by sincerity and clarity of style. Concerning the Reformation, Father Weigel remarks that "The Reform was not lacking in prophetic inspiration, even though it lacked the prophetic charism. There was much which the Reformers criticized which the Catholic admits was worthy of adverse judgment. Under *the divinely permitted blows of the scourge of secession,* he forced himself to correct abuses" (my italics).

In this and other passages, Father Weigel sounds as if he were a modern philosopher, discussing problems of truth with others, regardless of religious communion. In fact, such are the functions he envisions for a Catholic "theologian." But in addition to this contemplative theologian, Father Weigel assigns a high place to the non-contemplative episcopal authorities under whose direction all work proceeds, and who presumably express the will of God more directly: ". . . the theologian will do this work of the Church under the direction of the members of the Mystical Body structured and empowered for the work of guidance. These directors, the episcopal regimen, have a charism for their function. The theologian does not immediately share in that charism, though he has the charism for theological meditation and exposition." So, despite his "theology's" concern with problems of truth, Father Weigel returns to a view of God-through-Church which makes his speculations almost irrelevant.

Concerned with the necessity of loyalty to one's opponents, Father Weigel offers this advice to fellow Catholics: "One cannot begin a work of study with the antecedent decision to refute the thought of the author to be studied. . . . A Catholic does not go to non-Catholic sources in order to learn the revelation of Christ. . . . However, he can learn, first of all, what the other man said." This is an example of that irenic strain within American Catholicism which writers like Paul Blanshard have altogether overlooked.

Blanshard, indeed, has so obvious a distaste for everything connected with Roman Catholicism that it imposes severe limitations on the usefulness of his book (first published in 1949). He clearly considers himself a liberal, but many of the assumptions of what is commonly thought of as liberalism yield to his unrestrained antagonism. He uses the term "American," for instance, in a prescriptive sense that calls to mind the "Americanism" of the American Legion. According to Blanshard, the Catholic philosophy of education is "alien to the

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American outlook"; Catholic religious orders for women are "utterly alien to the typically robust and independent spirit of American womanhood." Blanshard criticizes Catholicism because it demands conformity and restricts individual initiative. But of Catholics he demands a rather curious conformity and disregard of conscience. He tells disapprovingly of a Catholic government employee who "refused to swear allegiance to the entire Constitution. She would defend all the laws of the commonwealth, she said, except those opposed to divine law." But is not this in the spirit of Thoreau?

The often-quoted judgment of Peter Viereck, "Catholic-baiting is the anti-Semitism of the liberals," catches something of the tone of Blanshard's writings, and also some of the response to his work. I believe, too, that there are historical similarities between anti-Semitism and extravagant anti-Romanism. Both tendencies have attracted paranoid fringe groups, always ready to detect conspiracies; both have been based on a sense of strangeness which we all feel when confronted with the anachronism of ancient survivals.

Blanshard, by virtually equating Catholicism with modern totalitarianism, fails to comprehend the uniqueness of the Church, just as those who seek to dispel the prejudice against Catholicism by pretending that it is a denomination like any other (the approach of the brotherhood movement) fail to comprehend it. It is of course easier to explain strange phenomena in terms of well-known categories. Blanshard does this by assuring his readers that, after all, there is nothing difficult about Catholicism; it is the same sort of thing which Nazism and Communism have made familiar to us. This procedure is not only unhistorical, but it also has the unfortunate practical consequence of increasing the emotional component of attitudes toward Catholicism.

ALL this is not to say, of course, that Blanshard's complaints against Catholic authoritarianism are without legitimacy. As Dom Aelred Graham observes in his thoughtful book of contemplations on the relationship between Catholicism and modern culture, "The divine constitution of the Catholic Church, indefectible in its essence and hierarchic in its structure, necessarily precludes any criticism by its members of the Church itself. It is not our business—nor, if we are wise, should it be our wish—to call in question what God has ordained. But the mental attitude engendered by this state of things, one of unquestioning acceptance, can sometimes extend beyond its due limits and so lead us to leave unexamined what in fact has every claim to searching attention."

There is a certain justice, also, in thinking of Catholicism as "un-American" in the historical sense, since the idea of a human organization as a direct representative of the divine, with powers to censor and coerce, certainly runs counter to the religious ideas of the Puritan founders of our republic. But no sooner do we say this than we must recognize these traits to be not uniquely characteristic of Catholicism, for the Calvinist-inspired tendencies toward restrictive theocracy, an important factor in our culture to this day, are sometimes not so very different in their practical consequences from Catholic attempts to intervene in the social order.

THERE is some interesting indirect evidence on the relation between Catholic and Puritan restrictive activities in Robert Cross's book on the rise of what became known among European Catholics as *"américanisme,"* an American "liberal" Catholicism, in the 19th century. This development, affecting most particularly the higher American clergy, appears to have been a Catholic adaptation to the dominant American Calvinist-derived Protestantism. Cross calls these priests "liberals," and so they were if we use that term somewhat loosely. But what is most interesting here is that it was a sign of Catholic liberalism in that period to favor the (Protestant-inspired) temperance movement; whereas the Catholic "conservatives" were inclined to a hands-off policy toward such "reforms" as dry laws. To favor the "coercive help" of civil authority in regard to temperance thus marked Bishop Keane as a liberal. Here is a clue to an otherwise puzzling phenomenon of nomenclature: Bishop Keane desired restrictive legislation, but since what he wanted was also advocated by the aggressive Protestant churches, he was able to go down in history as a liberal. Had he opposed only birth control instead of drinking as well, he might, by modern standards, be termed "conservative."

As we have indicated, the kernel of validity in Blanshard's position—the relatively greater propensity of Catholics to restrict individual freedom as compared to either Protestants or Jews—becomes obscured by his insistence on

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making this difference an absolute one. He discusses at length the Catholic use of economic boycott to enforce Catholic points of view in the moral sphere, but he does not mention current Protestant moves against liquor advertising; neither does he mention Jewish attempts to censor movies and books when these appear "anti-Semitic" (see "The 'Militant' Fight Against Anti-Semitism," by David Riesman, COMMENTARY, January 1951).

There is nothing wrong with having vigorous opinions on religious matters, and I think that Blanshard is quite right in attacking the sentimentalism of those who, for the sake of illusory "unity," refuse to discuss matters of religious difference. But what is disturbing in Blanshard's vigor is his naivety, his lack of discernment. To him, there seem to be two simple, quite sharply defined types of organization, one authoritarian (including Communists, Catholics, and Nazis), the other democratic ("American"). This view, in addition to its historical blindness to which I have already referred, ignores the great complexity of Catholicism. For instance, it is an open secret that the formal autocracy of Catholic parish and diocesan organization is modified by lay and clerical influences and pressures of various types. And this, of course, is true at the level of the Vatican itself. Blanshard also does not take into consideration the great differences within American Catholicism on important issues. A very informative unpublished Harvard B.A. thesis by Michael McCloskey ("The Diversity of Opinion within Contemporary Catholic Political Thought in America") shows a range from the pacifist and libertarian Catholic Worker movement, through the highly influential New Deal type of liberalism of the Jesuits, to conservative and rightist views of various kinds.

THE most satisfactory current treatment of American Catholicism, to my mind, is Kenneth W. Underwood's sociological study of Protestant-Catholic relations in Holyoke, Massachusetts. Underwood has a sense for the various levels of relations between American culture and Catholicism. The latter is seen not only as a formal hierarchy but also as a living organization, influenced by the diversity of its human components. It is seen, also, as a congeries of ethnic sub-cultures—Irish, Polish, and French. The importance in Catholicism of the tensions between hierarchy and laity is at least hinted at. On the other hand, American culture is not dealt with as if it consisted simply of "American freedom." There is in Underwood an appreciation for the complexity of inter-relationships between formal parliamentarism, the mass culture, a Puritan-derived ethos, a class-divided society, and a business economy.

Underwood's book has the additional advantage of discussing the strictly religious issues involved in Protestant-Catholic relations. Unfortunately, such competence is still all too rare in social science publications, so that many of the best discussions of the sociology of religious differences are from the pens of religious writers. (Here Father Weigel and Dom Graham continue the tradition of H. Richard Niebuhr, whose classic *Social Sources of Denominationalism* remains an essential work.) But Underwood's volume, despite its great virtues, unfortunately lacks an adequate historical dimension, without which all discussions of Catholicism tend to remain somewhat shallow. For not only is Holyoke Catholicism a contemporary American phenomenon—and from this point of view Underwood deals with it superbly—it is also a manifestation of ancient Roman Catholicism in the 20th century. This interplay of the ancient with the modern constitutes an additional dimension which future studies might well analyze in order to gain a better understanding of Roman Catholicism today.

Man in the Movies

AGEE ON FILM. CRITICISM AND COMMENT ON THE MOVIES. By JAMES AGEE. McDowell, Obolensky. 432 pp. $6.00.

Reviewed by WILLIAM S. POSTER

DESPITE the ease with which legends are manufactured, there is one respect in which the Agee legend seems to me justified: namely, in the scope of his endeavors, the sheer variety of his efforts, and his endurance of involvements so multifarious as to create a kind of personal isolation. Lyric poet, annalist of the sharecropper, white-haired boy of the Luce hierarchy, actor, television personality, peer of the avant-garde, Hollywood script-writer, his was a truly fabulous career, a safari which gave him a shot at all the American big game.

The work collected in *Agee on Film* offers a veritable jungle, a cross-hatched reticulation

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of values for those capable of disentangling them. Here is a highly endowed individual busy evaluating American life as it came at him through a medium and had to be refracted through an institution. The very style of his writing and the nature of his perspective changed radically under every institution for which he wrote—thereby supplying us with a critique of those institutions more directly relevant than can be supplied in any other way. Agee was engaged in exploring the new planet of American consciousness.

Let Us Now Praise Famous Men gives us, in a way, the platform from which all the subsequent operations of his life were launched. A man of unusual ability is sent by a wealthy Northern magazine to investigate the conditions of the sharecroppers, people who were the neighbors of his childhood, and tries desperately, inchoately, to do what? Certainly not merely to report them, to "see them," but—as C. Wright Mills wrote in a brilliant review in the now-defunct *Politics*—to make contact with them, to satisfy some elementary need for human solidarity. As Mills pointed out, Agee fails to break through all the differences to achieve this contact. This failure goads him to a frenzy of verbalization, an unprecedented expansion and condensation of language, furiously self-involved attacks on avant-garde and slick magazines, dithyrambs to Beethoven and other artists, tortured attempts to describe people, houses, chairs, oil lamps in such a way that the words themselves will take on material reality, afford him a satisfaction of contact which will substitute for the real one. He is, as it were, at the focus of all the basic oppositions of American life, city against country, North against South, intellectual against mass, big-money magazines against highbrow quarterlies. The inability of the author to come to any satisfactory terms with them is the real story of the book, a modern variant of the traditional American saga of artists who, beginning with Whitman, have refused to give up any possibility of appealing experience.

HAVING failed in a quest for direct universal experience which could be rendered in art, Agee apparently chose the cinema as the most satisfactory substitute for such experience. There it was brought to him prearranged by people more assuredly and crudely in contact with its varieties than he was himself; stars, directors, producers were themselves powerful factors in American life as well as its receiving and transmitting agents. He actually began reviewing movies for *Time* in 1941 and started his film column in the *Nation* in 1942, both of which ceased in 1948 after providing a spectacle of schizophrenic virtuosity, in seeing the same event through two personalities, unique in the history of journalism. Selections from *Time* and *Nation* reviews, two essays from *Life*, a short article on popular culture from *Partisan Review* and a lengthy review of *Sunset Boulevard* (from the British *Sight and Sound*) comprise a volume which has a certain historic dimension all its own, a warmth and largesse of spirit characteristic of the era.

The basic incoherences of Agee's mind are least apparent in the *Time* pieces; the Luce perspective, except for a few remarkable personal outbursts, forced them into an artificial unity, and the harsh demands of money-making journalism precluded the lavish subjectivity that disfigures so many of the *Nation* reviews. (The latter frequently have the tone of a man with a captive audience that not only does not object to the intrusion of inapposite personal detail, but actually requires it for sustenance.) Because of their order, clarity, and lack of affectation, the *Time* reviews afford one a certain relief by contrast, a relief which quickly gives way to irritation at the palpable suppression of the author's sensibility. The *Life* essays on John Huston and silent-film comedians have the conceptual structure that characterizes most of the large-scale articles on the arts that appear in that magazine: a portentously serious idea, of such academic solidity as to be unassailable, serves, with almost magical dexterity, as the lead-in and connecting thread to a superabundant wealth of entertaining reminiscences, gossipy anecdotes, and moderately interesting information. The *Partisan Review* article is a fragmentary series of *aperçus* without much linkage or evidence of over-all thought.

Agee's esential cinematic experience is distilled in the *Nation* series and one can approach it from several points of view, depending on one's bias, among them Agee's own announced standpoint as an "amateur critic among amateur critics," simply talking in print about common experiences. For a variety of reasons, some of which I hope are obvious, I find this statement unacceptable. Those who believe that cinema is an art (which still seems to me a matter for debate) and have some

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notion of what constitutes good cinema and hence good cinema criticism, can apply it to these columns, in which case, I believe, they will find them, on the whole, a failure.

THERE are actually only two important ways of using a movie camera, by way of its possibilities and by way of its nature. The first is the dominant approach of European cinema, the latter of the American. The American use of the camera is naturalistic in more senses than one; the camera as a recording and transmitting agent is what counts for the American film-makers, which precludes the maximum use of all its possibilities, particularly of "montage," according to Eisenstein the quintessence of high cinematic art. The American directors and producers simply bring us what we cannot go out and look at ourselves, spectacular people, actions and scenes that we must see in order to complement our own narrow range of experience. The natural center of the film is the star rather than, as in the European film, the writer-director to whom the images, actors, nature itself, are mere integers in the sum of his own dominating conception. The American audience mostly goes to see Cary Grant, James Cagney, Bing Crosby. The story unfolds their reality interlocked with the reality of the characters they represent (gangster, sophisticate, athlete) in environments which, by repetition, take on some of the characteristics of stars themselves, glamorous entities in the world of nature like the fissured reaches of the painted desert, the tumbleweed-strewn road to the petrified forest, or the more human neonscape of Broadway.

The Hollywood-style movie is essentially presentative, giving us as many aspects as possible of the things and people we want to see within the dynamic continuum of a story and organizing them formally. As in any art primarily concerned with sensory experience, ideas, story, overt social and political bias, though important, are inherently secondary. Indeed, the superficial content of a film may be in sharp contrast to the underlying and more powerful pull of the artistic urge behind it. For example, the law-and-order messages of most gangster films are in opposition to a basic pull toward rebellion and anarchy; pictures which come out against anti-Semitism or segregation often create character images at odds with their own content.

Agee's criticism of American movies seems to me inadequate partly because of the lack of an aesthetic scheme, partly because of his inability to perceive the full truth about some of the performers and the life out of which they emerge. Thus, to begin with a distinctly minor example, a picture like *Killer McCoy* is slighted by Agee; to be sure, its story and intellectual content are cheap and impoverished, but it is actually a first-rate film due to the superb projection by Mickey Rooney and Jimmy Dunn of images of certain classes of people in action, of what in them can be most readily transmuted into artistic terms. A director like John Huston is praised in irrelevant terms for his personality, which, however, often gets between the actors and the audience. Huston's ability to translate works of literature to the screen is of little intrinsic value; his most noteworthy films, *The Treasure of Sierra Madre* or *The Maltese Falcon,* add little to what can be obtained from a reading of Traven's powerful novel or Hammett's *tour de force.* Though Agee frequently singles out the right actors for praise or blame, the characterizations are often inapposite and academic —as in the *Life* essay on silent comedians which holds them to be immensely superior, in sheer capacity to produce unforced laughter, to the clowns of the sound era. This appraisal scarcely corresponds to the facts, for the entire world of the silent film, despite its other virtues, is too freakish, Gothic, and often unintentionally somber, for natural, spontaneous laughter.

There is, however, a less specialized approach to movies and its criticism which is perhaps closest to the way movies actually function in the life of the nation as a whole: that is, as a medium with no autonomous qualities whatever, a gigantic grab-bag of all the arts and intellectual pursuits where the finest museum gems jostle the baubles of uninspired hacks, mingling political, social, and religious concepts borrowed from the classics with *ad hoc* nostrums, offering something for every level of intellect and sensibility. Agee can be most sympathetically seen as a man wading into this stupefying cultural bog armed with everything from a Burroughs adding-machine to a pitchfork, not to mention a machine gun, deodorizer, and Geiger-counter. He deals with all aspects of the phenomenon and becomes, as a result, perhaps the only gifted writer of the period to get into print with animadversions on every aspect of the Amer-

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ican scene, carrying high-level analysis sufficiently far into the world of social consequence so that the ideals of the imagination and intellect get at least within hailing distance of the muddy visage of daily life.

The animadversions vary in quality, as does the style. But, taken altogether, *Agee on Film* is undoubtedly one of the most impressive volumes of recent years. How much the weaknesses of its subject matter will ultimately lessen its force is difficult to predict. At present, it offers fascinating reading, stirring one's own critical faculties to appreciative or irritated life at every sentence.

McCarthyism and the Professors

THE ACADEMIC MIND. By PAUL LAZARSFELD and WAGNER THIELENS, JR. Free Press. 460 pp. $7.50.

Reviewed by ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG

THIS book is an attempt to assess the effects of the McCarthy episode on social scientists in the various colleges. However, McCarthy himself is never mentioned by name (his time of glory is discreetly termed "the difficult years"), and the situation in which his talents found their scope is not discussed. The Congressional investigators therefore appear to jump like *diaboli ex machina* on professors who were quietly cultivating their academic gardens. Yet the whole drama, and the role of the academic community in it, can be understood only if the two main sources of the popular tide which bore McCarthy are traced.

The first was the reluctance of many Americans to accept our various postwar setbacks in the Far East and in Europe as unavoidable, or as due to American policies which, though foolish, had been carried out in good faith and with the backing of the nation. It was easier to believe "we wuz robbed"—that Communist agents had infiltrated and misled policy-making bodies. Second, some Communists had indeed infiltrated governmental agencies at a time when few Americans realized that they were no less dangerous than the Nazis. By referring to the 1948 Congressional investigation of Communist infiltration as a "red herring," the Truman administration became the target of strong popular resentment, on which McCarthy soon rode to prominence. Truman, understandably, wished to protect the Democratic record. But there had been carelessness, and his blanket

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denial of Communist infiltration gave the impression that the government was unwilling to check it. It was this impression which led people to tolerate and even favor some form of lynch justice. Social scientists who had supported the administration and helped to draft many of its policies behaved as Truman did and met the same resentment. And they offered a more vulnerable target to bullying investigators, if only because they were more outspoken.

When Eisenhower succeeded Truman, the red-hunting show kept going for a while longer, but people became bored with it when they realized that, though there had been Communist infiltration, it had had no decisive effect on postwar policies. The issue is now dead, i.e. academic—*The Academic Mind* resembles nothing so much as a fish left behind by the receding tide. Despite the promise of the title, the authors map only that small, rather untidy corner of the academic mind in which the whole lurid spectacle has been left to moulder. Nevertheless, much can be learned from the book—and not least of all that "the difficult years," though releasing pent-up emotions, did not teach the intellectual community much. Represented here by the authors as well as their subjects, the academy seems still unwilling to distinguish liberals and radicals from Communists. The matter is no longer in the public eye, but the confusion persists.

How did social scientists fare during "the difficult years"? *The Academic Mind* tries to answer this question by measuring the degree to which they were, or felt themselves to be, threatened or impeded in their broad academic functions. However, the answer given by the book does not rest on the evidence collected with so much admirable ingenuity. The interpretations favored by the authors seem to me to follow more from the bias they share with their respondents than from their data. I have seldom read anything Professor Lazarsfeld had a hand in without learning a great deal—but here, as so often happens, the dazzling brilliance of his means altogether outshines the results.

No comparable investigation of the academic mind was undertaken in past decades. Hence the authors could at best hope to establish an initial "bench mark" which might be useful if the matter is ever investigated again. Yet Lazarsfeld and Thielens often write as though a professor's saying "I am more intimidated today than yesterday" proves that yesterday (or tomorrow) he could not have said the same thing. Isn't it possible, on the contrary, that anxiety about threats to academic freedom increases as the freedom does, and that professors are prone to discount the present in favor of rosier-seeming past or future periods?

Although this difficulty is acknowledged (and then quietly disregarded), the authors never quite resolve the ambiguity of the question they set themselves; it remains unclear whether they tried to find out to what degree social scientists actually *were* threatened, or to what degree they *felt* threatened. Far too little weight is given to the possibility that since most social scientists hold left-of-center views, they were likely to feel uncomfortable and perhaps threatened during "the difficult years" simply because right-of-center views had gained an unaccustomed ascendancy.

The meat of the book lies in an unexceptionable index of academic "productivity," and more questionable indices of "apprehension" and "permissiveness." The authors find, roughly, that the most "productive" and "permissive" were also the most "apprehensive" professors. "The difficult years," they hint, were the cause of the apprehension and therefore of an unusual danger to academic freedom.

"Apprehension" means perception or understanding—or fear. The "apprehension index" only registers fear and anxiety, but it is used to suggest that professors were apprehensive because they apprehended a real danger. Yet some professors might have suffered from anxieties displaced onto but not caused by "the difficult years." The authors briefly ponder the possibility that the more productive professors were more apprehensive because higher intellectual performance may be associated with a higher anxiety level. They were unable to test this, and later the unexplored possibility is altogether ignored, as are all sources of anxiety other than external threats and lack of institutional defense against them. In short, the "apprehension index" is interpreted as though it measures an objective threat rather than the anxiety of those who—rightly or wrongly—feel threatened. It will not do, therefore, to claim that the authors were measuring fear regardless of its source or legitimacy. This plea would strip their work of any relevance to the issue of academic freedom. As Robert Oppenheimer once said, "The answer to fear cannot always

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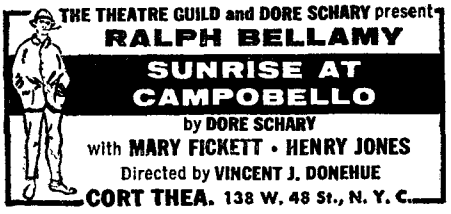
lie in the dissipation of the [external] causes of fear; sometimes it lies in courage."

It is possible, too, that professors classified as "highly apprehensive" magnified their anxiety and concern about the danger they thought they were in in order to magnify their own courage (or minimize their timidity). Lazarsfeld and Thielens do not seriously entertain this hypothesis, although it offers a straightforward explanation for the fact, duly noted by them, that the "highly apprehensive" professors usually said they would volunteer to do just those things they said they were afraid of: join suspect organizations; subscribe to suspect magazines; and protest against exclusion of controversial topics, speakers, and so on. An exceptional person may volunteer to do just what he is "apprehensive" of. (Plato does not report that Socrates—in the face of very real danger—trimmed his sails; but neither does he report him as "highly apprehensive.") But are we to suppose that college professors are always that exceptional? Should we not inquire whether some, at least, might be cherishing a romantic image of themselves as courageously defying the forces of evil? The question is not even raised in *The Academic Mind.* The authors wonder whether the defiant intentions of the respondents were carried out. They were. But Lazarsfeld and Thielens never question whether there actually was defiance involved in reading a liberal magazine like *The Reporter,* or only a fantasy of defiance. (I suspect that on many campuses it took more courage to subscribe to the *National Review.*) The authors themselves point out that professors believe they are ranked very low in popular esteem, when in fact they are ranked quite high: right after Cabinet members, according to some surveys. Perhaps the professors' apprehensiveness is as unrealistic as their judgment of their own social status.

One last point about the "apprehension scale": if the late Senator McCarthy had filled out the Lazarsfeld-Thielens questionnaire, *mutatis mutandis,* he would have been found at least as "apprehensive" of Communists as Dean Acheson. If the questionnaire were submitted, *mutatis mutandis,* to Colonel Nasser, he would turn out to be "highly apprehensive" of Israel. How useful is a scale that would label as "apprehensive" (1) a person who wants to play the hero and magnifies a danger so as to advance his own career; and (2) as equally apprehensive a person who realistically apprehends an actual danger and faces it; and (3) a person who declares himself apprehensive of something because he loathes it though he has no reason to fear it? All types were doubtless present among the respondents. No conclusions can be drawn as long as they are not distinguished.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THE "permissiveness index" leads to less ambiguous but also less significant results. Professors Lazarsfeld and Thielens decided that only questions establishing the degree of tolerance of Communists and of opinions and personalities considered leftist were pertinent. Of course they are entitled to think so. But to label the resulting scale a "permissiveness index" is awkward and misleading. Had they wanted to measure permissiveness, they might have included items such as "Should Gerald L. K. Smith and William Z. Foster have the same right to make speeches on campus as other political leaders?"* Their questions measure only tolerance toward the left. And since the authors conscientiously report elsewhere that the respondents were overwhelmingly inclined toward the left, it turns out that the "permissiveness index" measures how permissive some professors were toward their own views when articulated by others. Even a Communist respondent would be classified as "highly permissive"! Of course, most of the social scientists did not share the Communist or pro-Communist views they felt should be aired. Yet their own beliefs were historically more continuous with leftist than with rightist views. The same professors, if tested for it, might turn out to be much less tolerant of

*Adapted from a questionnaire of the American Civil Liberties Union.

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rightist than of leftist views. We then might have to classify as "highly intolerant" some of the social scientists now rated as "highly permissive."

According to the interviews compiled in *The Academic Mind*, research and publication, too, were impaired because professors turned cautious in the face of threats and attacks; they avoided controversial subjects in the classroom, secretly trimmed reference lists, even eliminated courses in comparative economics and other dangerous subjects, and avoided writing on contemporary history, Russia, Marxism, etc. The respondents do not hesitate to portray themselves and their colleagues as public heroes and private cowards. In their eagerness to indict enemies whom they despised, professors drew a self-portrait which is fortunately as unrealistic, in my opinion, as it is unattractive.

If reticence in dealing with controversial subjects was a fact, a dearth or at least a decrease of research papers and books on Soviet economics and politics and other subjects named as delicate would have occurred in professional journals. My own impression, however, is that social scientists published more work on these subjects during "the difficult years" than before. Nor do I believe that there was less research into Marxism or less teaching of comparative economics than formerly. There is no evidence of the "toning down" of oral and written work that respondents attribute to each other. I am sorry I only have my impression to offer on this point. Here Professors Lazarsfeld and Thielens had a splendid opportunity to verify *objectively* whether their respondents had been as intimidated as they claimed. Publications, college catalogues, etc., etc., were all available—one could have compared the actual behavior of social scientists with their own account of it. The authors did not do so, yet they present data on "patterns of caution" as though they were certain of dealing with fact and not fancy.

Suppose there actually were less publications on controversial topics. Did professors retrench because they were afraid? In his book on voting behavior, Professor Lazarsfeld found that when exposed to cross currents—e.g., a Democratic family tradition and a new suburban Republican situation—voters tend to withdraw and become non-voters, though they are not intimidated. Perhaps social scientists, inclined to the left, perceived new facts hard to reconcile with their accustomed views and withdrew in a similar manner.

All too often social scientists have failed to draw the distinction between "heretics" and "conspirators" which the authors cite in their work but do not use. Yet the distinction is indispensable for understanding "the difficult years." Part of the reason these years were difficult for the academic community was because of its refusal to distinguish conspirators from heretics. In turn, part of the public refused to distinguish heretics from conspirators, and pressure was applied to oust both. The public, I think, was confused; but the academic community was also confused.

God and Modern Art

ART IN CRISIS. By HANS SEDLMAYR. Regnery. 266 pp., ill. $6.50.

Reviewed by ALFRED WERNER

PANEL discussions in academic circles are rarely characterized by violent outbursts of emotion. But in the summer of 1950, when Hans Sedlmayr, professor of art history at the University of Munich, appeared at a Darmstadt gathering to defend his thesis that contemporary art was the symptom of a universal disease, he was booed and even interrupted with ironic shouts of "Heil Hitler!" Sedlmayr was challenged by another speaker, Professor Willi Baumeister, known for his non-objective paintings, and a teacher (from 1946 till his death in 1955) at the Stuttgart Academy of Fine Arts. It was, perhaps, not sporting to inject a political and personal note. But Baumeister, as an anti-Nazi and a protagonist of abstract art, had been fired from a teaching job in 1933, and for twelve years thereafter had, like other modernists, lived a rather precarious life. He did not refrain from reminding the audience that Sedlmayr, self-styled champion of sanity and morality, had, as a teacher at the University of Vienna under Hitler, happily endorsed the Nazi philosophy!

Austrian-born Sedlmayr was invited to Darmstadt because two years earlier he had published a best-selling volume, *Verlust der Mitte* ("The Lost Center"). The German title refers to the author's main point—that, having lost their center in God and Man, the arts of the last two centuries also lost all reality and compre-

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hensibility—and therefore is more apt than the title supplied by the British translator, Brian Battershaw. This book, though neither well written nor well illustrated, has sold more than 100,000 copies in Germany and Austria since its publication ten years ago at Salzburg.

Whatever he may have been in the past, Sedlmayr is now a staunch Catholic, and indeed the dominant idea of this book—that man's fall is the cause of his presumptuous endeavor to be autonomous, to replace God as the center of all things—comes from St. Augustine. Unfortunately, the fruits of collaboration with the Nazis peer through the historian's Christian terminology, in the frequent use of words like *zersetzend* ("decomposing") or *untermenschlich* ("subhuman") more reminiscent of Streicher's newspaper, *Der Stuermer,* than of serious art history. Echoes of *Mein Kampf* are present too. In 1924, Hitler described cubist, futurist, and dadaist art as "the morbid excrescences of insane and degenerate men," as "cultural decay," and warned that it was the state's business to "prevent a people from being driven into the arms of spiritual madness." Perhaps Sedlmayr, lecturing on the subject to Viennese students during the last war, also endorsed state control and punishment for artists painting skies green or trees purple, but in rewriting these lectures for publication, he assumed the role of an unpolitical scholar, observing and weighing the world from the quiet of his study. And whereas Hitler found no faults with the 19th century, Sedlmayr suggests that the sickness of our age, of which modern art is only one symptom, began its work of corroding society long before the French Revolution.

In Sedlmayr's view the arts were healthy so long as they were all united in the creation of great cathedrals. The trouble started when the related forces of Enlightenment, Deism, Democracy, and Industrialism set man up as the center of all things, which led to the arts breaking away from each other and to the appearance of pure architecture, pure sculpture, and pure painting. Richard Wagner ("undoubtedly the genius of the century") vainly tried to arrest this process of disintegration by advocating a return to the *Gesamtkunstwerk,* but he was an exception, for much 19th century art was "quite peculiarly dishonest and insincere." Sedlmayr's *bêtes noires* are not the shallow academicians (like Bouguereau who was, indeed, quite peculiarly dishonest and insincere) but rather all artists who emphasized color, and masses in shadow or in light, rather than line and contour. His negative judgment includes Goya (one of the "great depulverizing agencies"), Constable, Turner, the Impressionists, the Pointillists, and so forth.

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Not only did these artists desert linearism, they also dared to free themselves from theological and mythological subject matter. Worse still, man no longer was portrayed as the glorious creature of the Renaissance masters—in Seurat's work he is "like a wooden puppet," and in Cézanne "an apple has the same physiognomic value as a face." How this dethronement of man jibes with the arrogance of modern man (who wishes to replace God), Sedlmayr does not bother to explain.

This is not the only inconsistency in the book. The 19th century is seen as a period of eclecticism, weakness, and lack of conviction (what about the rebellious spirits, from Courbet to Toulouse-Lautrec?). The 20th century, on the other hand, is attacked for being just the opposite—iconoclastic, forceful, and contemptuous of tradition. Formal distortion (practiced, I believe, by all good artists in all lands and all ages) suggests to him the broken universe; other symptoms of decay are the influence of Negro sculpture and of primitive and pre-Columbian art, the predilection for "demoniac" art (from Bosch, Brueghel, and Goya, to Ensor, Kubin, and the Surrealists), and the elevation of caricature to the status of a legitimate art form. He is upset by an abstract painting because it does not permit immediate recognition of space relations, by the "instability" of Rodin's *Tumblers,* by a Le Corbusier villa which, instead of resembling

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the traditional type of house, "suggests a spaceship that has just landed."

Sedlmayr is living proof that a very learned man (he has done first-rate scholarly work on Baroque architecture) can be a philistine at heart. He seems to resent all art that is new, complicated, mysterious. Admitting that he had never read a line Ezra Pound wrote, an American Congressman recently explained: "I like things that are clear." Sedlmayr says the same thing, but he requires more than two hundred pages to make this statement.

The most offensive feature of the volume, perhaps, is the author's assumption that he knows precisely what God likes and dislikes. He exclaims: "The disrupted relationship with God is at the heart of the disturbance," and "All suffer because God has become distant, or, perhaps, is dead." But what does this tell us concerning the present state of art? Is art exclusively religious? Wasn't da Vinci in conflict with the Church? Wasn't Perugino a nonbeliever? Didn't art thrive in the civilizations of India and the Far East, to which Sedlmayr's concept of God must be alien, and isn't it conceivable that art could flourish in a society of atheists?

Sedlmayr, with his resonant catchwords—"egalitarian craze," "degradation," "materialism," "nihilism," "chaos"—sounds more like a revivalist preacher than a sober historian. He loathes everything that is dynamic, expressionist, irrational—in other words, all that goes beyond pretty illustration. He denounces modern art as escapist, but how much more escapist is a critic like Sedlmayr who, having lived under the Nazis, nevertheless resents Franz Marc for saying that man was "hideous," Barlach for seeing man as "one of nature's experimental failures," and George Grosz for declaring that man was "a beast!"

It may have been bad manners on the part of Willi Baumeister to remind Sedlmayr of his Hitlerite past. For my part, I wondered whether a repentant Sedlmayr was not thinking of Auschwitz and Dachau when he declared that contemporary funerals showed "the contempt for man . . . the absence of any true culture." But, I quickly noted, he was only concerned about modern funereal architecture.

Book Reviewers in This Issue

Raymond Rosenthal, a frequent contributor, is a free-lance writer and translator. He reviewed *Patterns* in our May 1958 issue.

Werner Cohn is a young sociologist who is now teaching at Ashland College, Wisconsin.

William S. Poster, poet and critic, has written for *Partisan Review* and the *New Republic*.

Ernest van den Haag of New York University is co-author (with Ralph Ross) of *The Fabric of Society*. This review is based on a paper presented to the recent convention of the American Psychological Association.

Alfred Werner, who contributed "The Painter Jules Pascin" to the August 1958 Commentary, is an art historian and critic.

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